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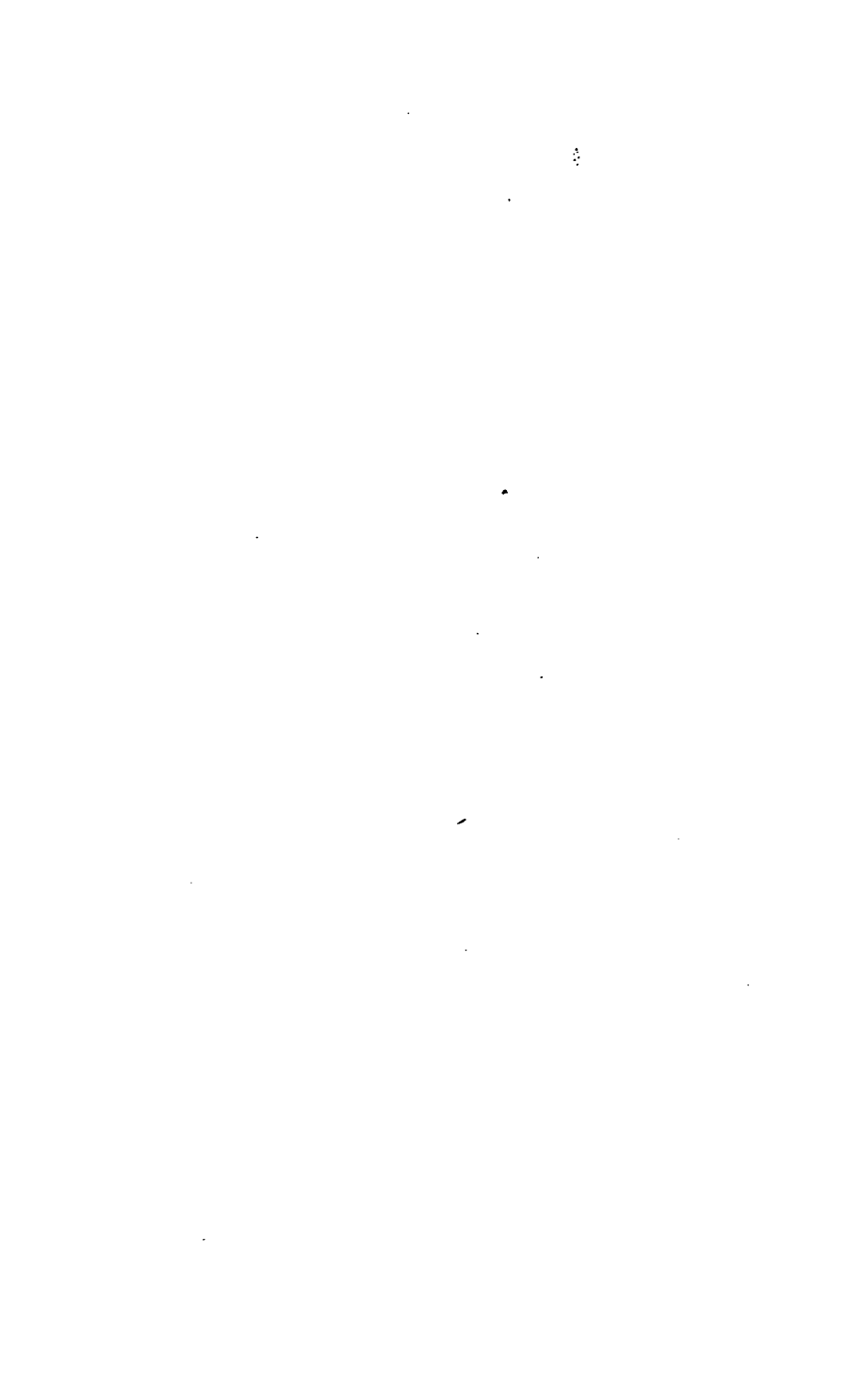
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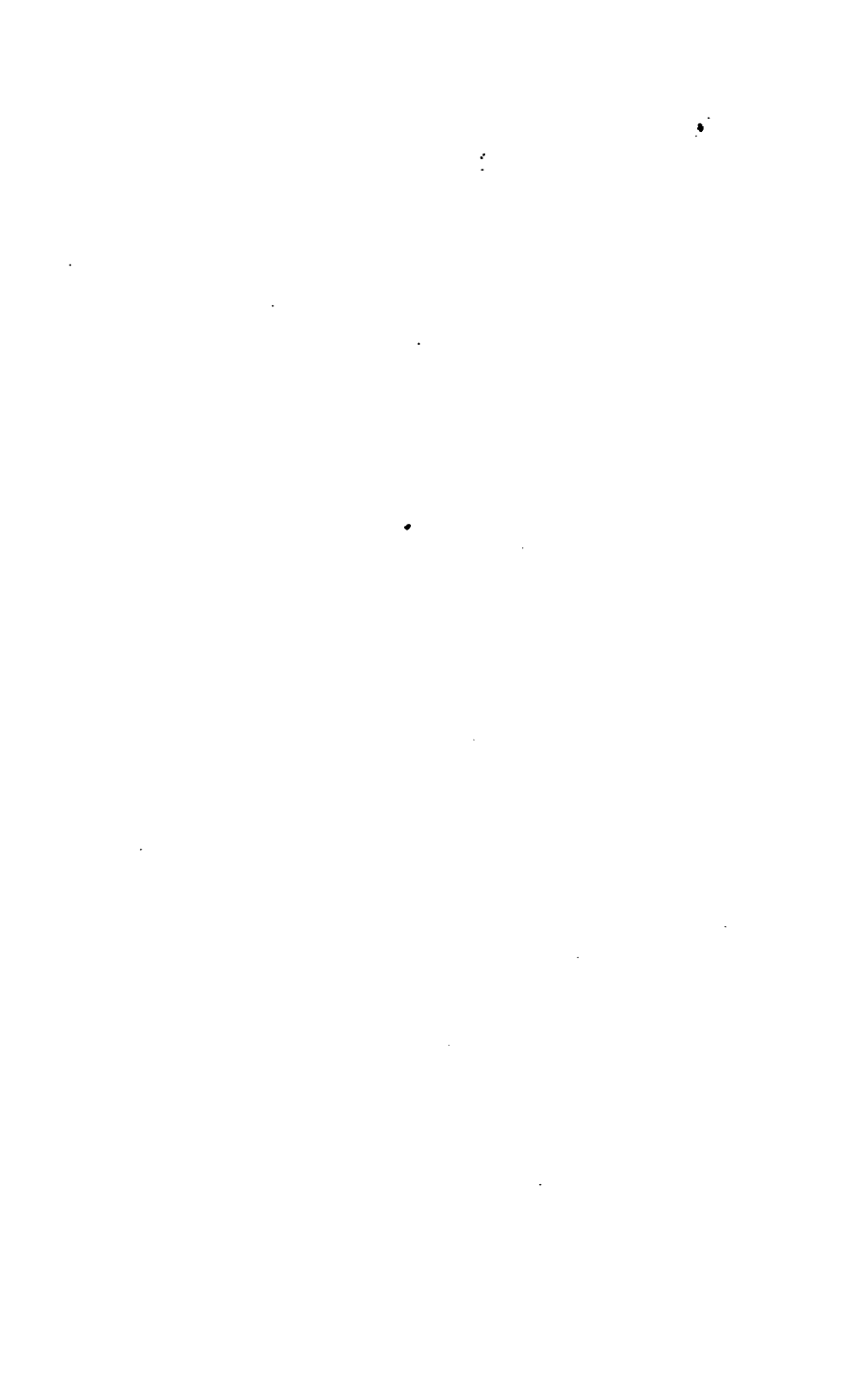
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THE AMERICAN PULPIT OF THE DAY.

THE AMERICAN PULPIT OF THE DAY.

FORTY-TWO
SERMONS

BY THE

MOST DISTINGUISHED LIVING AMERICAN PREACHERS.

FIRST SERIES



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PILATE'S QUESTION—"WHAT IS TRUTH?"

BY BISHOP CUMMINS,

Of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

"Pilate saith unto Him, What is Truth?"—JOHN xviii. 38.

THIS question was asked of Jesus by the Roman Governor at whose judgment bar He stood for trial.

He who asked it was the only man to whom the Redeemer vouchsafed no reply. All other enquirers after truth received a prompt and full response. To the Jews who asked, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" He replied, "This is the work of God, to believe on Him whom He hath sent." To the young man who inquired, "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He answered, "Come, take up the cross, and follow Me." To the lawyer who even temptingly asked, "Which is the great commandment of the law?" He replied, Love—supreme love to God, universal love to man. To His timid disciple Thomas, who exclaimed, almost in despair, "How can we know the way?" His most emphatic response was, "I am the way; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me!" But when the man first in rank and authority in the nation, the Roman Governor and judge, asks of Him the mighty question, "What is truth?" He is silent, and deigns him no reply.

Why is this? Evidently there is some important reason for it; and that reason must be looked for in the character of Pilate, in the spirit and temper in which the question was propounded. It has been a mooted question—"What was the spirit in which Pilate asked *this question?*" As great an authority as Lord

Bacon conceived that the words were uttered in a jesting mood. " 'What is truth?' said jesting Pilate, and would not stay for a reply." Another authority, almost as great, Archbishop Whately, replies that "Never was one less in a jesting mood than Pilate on this occasion." If, then, the words were not uttered in jest, they were the utterance of scepticism, or of sceptical indifference, and spoken in haughty derision and contempt.

Pilate was a Roman, and an educated Roman. He had studied the philosophies of the age, and was familiar with the controversies among the philosophic schools of that period of the world. He was acquainted, too, with the religion of his time. The ceremonies of Paganism he had witnessed from his childhood, and his residence in Judea had rendered him familiar with the Jewish faith and the contention of its rival sects, Pharisee, Sadducee, and Essene. The age in which he lived was one of almost universal scepticism among educated Romans. Faith in the old classic mythology had died out among the cultivated classes, and, while unwilling to disturb the belief of the unthinking masses in the popular religion, the more learned contented themselves with a refined scepticism that doubted all spiritual realities, and to whom earthly good, luxury, power, political success, were the only breath of life.

This was the class to which Pilate belonged; a man whose life lay among the world's business and the world's politics; an unbeliever in unseen realities, or in the worth and nobleness of goodness; willing to uphold the popular religion as a conservative element in society and in ruling the people, but utterly ignorant of it as a Divine power claiming obedience. To him Paganism and Judaism, the worship of Jehovah and of Jupiter, were equally groundless superstitions; well enough for those who knew no better, harmless beliefs to be tolerated and unmolested. Christianity to such a man could be, of course, only a new sect of Judaism, the sect of the Nazarenes, and Jesus only the deluded founder of a new heresy, a Galilean enthusiast. And yet when he was brought so close to the Divine Redeemer,

there seems to have been a momentary giving way of his former habit of mind. The personal presence of Jesus, his bearing under the long and terrible trial, the serenity of soul, the calm, unwearying patience under insult, and hearing the strange replies from His lips to His questioners—all seemed to have awakened in Pilate a feeling of respect, and even of awe, as though he were dealing with a being of superhuman powers.

"Art thou a king, then?" asks he of Jesus, as he hears the accusation of the Jews. "I am," was the calm reply, "but my kingdom is not of this world." My kingdom is over human hearts, my subjects are the votaries of the truth, those who are of the truth, seekers of truth, willing to follow it at whatever cost and wherever it may lead. "What is truth?" replied the careless man of the world: who knows anything about it? and rose up from the judgment seat in haste.

Alas! Pilate has ever had his successors, and never more numerous than to-day. Indeed, there is a remarkable likeness between this age and the age of Pilate in this respect: in the prevalence of scepticism among the educated classes. It is a time of loosening the old foundations upon which the generations before us have stood so securely. Doubt and unbelief are almost in the air—epidemic. It is almost fashionable to be a disciple of Comte, of Herbert Spencer, and of Darwin. The conflict thickens around us, and it is not a struggle at some of the outposts, it is about the very citadel of our faith—the Christian Scriptures, the Christian's Christ, the Christian hope of immortality, and the Christian's God; these are the sublime verities for which we are contending. And the very conflict itself creates a class of men who become indifferent to all religious truth: men who treat all religious beliefs as equally harmless delusions; who are content to see all forms and phases of popular religion tolerated, but who treat them all alike with the same careless indifference. They are men who can dismiss the profoundest questions that agitate the soul of man with a sneer: "What is truth? Who can tell? who decide among contending sects? One is as true and as groundless as another."

These are our men of the world, immersed in questions of trade or of politics; not men who avow scepticism, but men who have no faith in the reality of religion, or in the certainty of religious truth, and its transforming power over the soul. They have known some claiming to be Christians who have been proved hollow and false, and they conclude that all are alike. Thus they come to doubt all goodness, all truth, and, like Pilate, take their part in the world's more substantial realities—its pursuit of pleasure, power, and gain.

To these Pilate-minded souls there comes no reply to the light, flippant cavillings concerning ethereal verities; no voice from heaven breaks upon their ears saying, "*This is the way; walk ye in it!*" No light falls upon their path from the skies. Jesus, from amidst the darkness and agony of the cross, heard the faint cry for help from the dying malefactor by his side, and opened to him the gates of Paradise, but he deigned no reply to a Roman Pro-consul on his judgment seat, and left him to grope his way onward into utter darkness.

Pilate's cry is in the air to-day. It is repeated on every side, and in every department of intellectual pursuit. In the elaborate philosophical essay, and learned scientific treatise; in novel and poem; in magazine and review; and in the issue of every daily journal, there is an echo of this question, "What is truth?" What is God? What is Christ? What is man? Whence did he come? Whither is he going? What is after death? It is a cry for light, for truth—the truth that saves, heals, comforts, overcomes the world, triumphs in death.

What, then, is the spirit in which the question must be asked to obtain a reply?

I. One answer to this has already been given: it must not be in Pilate's spirit—in scepticism or sceptical indifference. Such a spirit is wanting in the very first element to ensure success. Its very tone is an insult. It is like the act of a modern traveller, knocking at the gate of some deserted oracle of Isis or of Delphos, and demanding in derision a response from the dead divinity. In this light, what an absurdity—nay, what an

WHAT IS TRUTH?

insult—is the prayer-guage of Professor Tyndall which has so lately startled and shocked the Christian world, proposing that one ward of an hospital should be set apart as the subject of prayer for their recovery, and let the question of the value of prayer be tested by the results. The very suggestion is an insult—a proposal to God to put His fidelity to the test of a single experiment, a scientific test. In what does it differ from the wild experiment of Rousseau, who proposed a test by which he will determine whether there is a God? He will cast a stone at a particular tree, and if it strikes the tree he will conclude that the Deity has accepted the test, has guided the universe, and that there is a God. If the stone misses the mark, he will conclude there is no God. He performs the act, hurls the stone, which flies wide of the mark. There is no condescension to such a trifle. The cry of the flippant sceptic will never reach the heavens. “He that comes to God must believe *that He is*.”

II. He who would receive an answer to this question must ask it in the spirit of an earnest seeker and votary of truth. The words of our Lord which called forth Pilate's question, “I came into the world to bear witness unto the truth; every one that is of the truth heareth My voice,” have often been so strangely interpreted as to lose their chief significance. Most readers interpret the words as a mere assertion of Jesus that what He taught was the truth; as though they read, “Every one that heareth My words is of the truth,” has the truth. But what He said was vastly different. Every one that is *of the truth* (i.e., every one who sincerely seeks after truth, and is willing to follow wherever it leads, in opposition to prejudice or inclination), he is My subject, says the Divine Redeemer; “he hears My voice, and follows Me.” What a difference! “Every one wishes to have truth *on his side*, but it is not every one who wishes sincerely to be *on the side of truth*.” He that *does*, that seeks earnestly and sincerely to know it, shall most surely find the precious pearl.

There *is* such a thing as honest doubt. There is the real perplexity of truth-loving minds grappling with some difficulty

which they would fain remove. To such Jesus has a reply full and distinct as He spake to the Jews: "If ye *continue* in my word ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Continuance in the pursuit will even bring reward. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and the Lord shall guide thee continually."

The history of Christianity abounds with illustrations of this. In the latter part of the last century, Lord Lyttelton, the historian, and his friend Gilbert West, had both imbibed principles of unbelief, and together agreed to write something in favour of infidelity. For this purpose each of them chose a topic: Lord Lyttelton the conversion of St. Paul, and Mr. West the resurrection of Christ. "For this purpose," says Dr. Samuel Johnson, who records these facts, "they determined to thoroughly study the sacred records. They were honest doubters, and, being honest, their studies ended in conviction. They were both convinced of their errors, and became converts to the religion of Christ. Both took up their pens and became its champions; Lord Lyttelton produced a treatise on the conversion of St. Paul, "to which," says Dr. Johnson, "infidelity has never been able to fabricate a specious answer;—" Gilbert West, a work on the Resurrection of our Lord, of masterly power. How different the malevolent spirit of Strauss and Goodwin, the flippancy of Renan, the bitterness of Buckle, the mocking tone of Darwin and Spencer!

III. Again, he who would receive an answer to this question must ask it in a spirit of willingness to follow it, to obey its voice, to submit to its guidance. Men, it is to be feared, are too often afraid to know the truth, lest it prove a hard master. "Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil," said the Great Teacher. They fear to see the light, lest it condemn their entire lives. If there be one truth which history confirms more forcibly *than* another, it is the fact that unbelief in religion has its seat in the *heart*, and not in the head; in the *will*, and not in the understanding. Men of corrupt lives dread

the truth, and therefore love the darkness. The surest way to keep men in unbelief is to keep them evil in their lives. Then unbelief becomes their *interest*, for the truth would rob them of their cherished sins. And it will ever be found that in those communities and nations where the greatest corruption in morals prevails, there infidelity abounds. It was only a degradation like that of France in the days preceding her first revolution that could have produced the monstrous unbelief of those days.

This great truth is most plainly taught in that frequent utterance of our Lord, "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God;" or, as the words in the original strictly teach, "If any man *is willing* to do God's will, he shall live." Here is an answer to the Pilate-minded men of our day that admits of no evasion, and thoroughly tests the honesty, the sincerity of the question. You ask, "What is truth? which is the way? where is solid ground? how shall we find the light that never leads astray?" He who "spake as never man spake" answers: "If any man is willing to do God's will, he shall know." "The way to judge of religion," says Jeremy Taylor, "is by doing our duty, and theology is rather a Divine life than a Divine knowledge. In heaven we shall first see, and then love; but here we must first love, and then love will open our eyes as well as our hearts, and we shall then understand. Christianity is the easiest and yet the hardest thing in the world: like a secret in arithmetic, infinitely hard till it be found out by the right method, and then so plain we wonder we did not understand it earlier." An equally great mind—Pascal—has said: "In order to love human things, we must know them; in order to know divine things, we must love them."

Ah! this epidemic of unbelief of the nineteenth century—men trace it to the progress of science, but it has another origin: it is the fruit of evil living, of an age luxurious, effeminate, corrupt in heart. Where there is one honest doubter there are a hundred whose interest it is to disbelieve—who love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. It is an age that

has become enervated by luxury and self-indulgence—an age that may be called, as Jesus styled the age in which He lived, an adulterous generation, that gladly hails as its prophet and teacher Herbert Spencer, who builds again the old decayed altar of the Athenians, and inscribes upon it, “To the Unknown God.”

But to earnest souls, to honest hearts, to men who are *willing* to do God’s will, willing to be changed, to be made pure, here is an infallible test. Imagine such a man, who has struggled for long years and in vain to know the truth. Imagine him coming upon this utterance, “*if any.*” Here is a new and ~~untried~~ road. He has waited to act till he saw clearly. Now he is told to act, and he shall know. He begins in earnest hopefulness, in obedience, in a child-like spirit at the heart, the life. Oh! if angels ever long to be teachers of men, it is then.

But a greater than angels comes to his help: the Holy Ghost, who guides into all truth, enters the soul, opens the windows, and lets in light from heaven. The man is taught of God. Alas! such child-like souls are rare. The very first element of success is wanting. Men do not wish to be changed, to give up cherished sins. An eminent illustration of this is seen in Augustine. For years he groped in darkness, seeking the truth—years of fruitless effort. What was the secret of his failure? An evil habit, an unclean appetite, held him a prisoner. But there came a time when at last he was *willing* to do God’s will, willing to abandon his sin. Then the light broke upon his soul in a flood of dazzling radiance, never again to be eclipsed.

IV. One other thought is to be added. The decay of faith in Christianity has another cause in our day. It is the utter neglect of the words of Christ. It is an age of marked neglect, of indifference to the study of Scripture among the masses. Everything else takes the place of this. The romance, the magazine, the newspaper, are the only intellectual food of millions, and much of that a poisoned diet. Thousands, who eagerly listen to every utterance of unbelief in novels, and reviews, and daily ~~ournals~~ ^{ournals}, never open the pages of Scripture. The words of Jesus are unheard amid the confusion of tongues; and yet they

demand the deep, profound, earnest study of a lifetime. He who searches them shall find them bearing in themselves the mightiest evidence to their divinity—echoes from heaven. To the soul who *thus* asks, “What is truth?” the answer will come in a way perhaps unexpected. Truth will appear, not in a philosophy, not in a dogmatic system, but in a *Person*: “*I am the way, the Truth, and the life!*”—Jesus—Son of God and Son of Man—in himself solving every problem, removing every perplexity, answering every questioning of the soul. You ask, with modern science, “What is God? Show us the Father!” and He replies: “He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. I and the Father are one.” You ask, with modern philosophy, “Is the soul of man immaterial and immortal?” and He answers: “I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me shall never die.” You ask for rest—rest for the intellect, rest for the conscience, rest for the heart—and he replies, “Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.” You crave some satisfying portion, some food that is not perishable, something to assuage immortal thirst, and He responds: “I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger.” The way is dark about you, and lo! He cries: “I am the light of the world.” The unseen world is all wrapped in mystery and silence, and Jesus speaks: “Let not your heart be troubled. In my Father’s house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you.” “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.” Oh! sublime discovery! Oh, Eternal Truth! I have found Thee Oh, Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world Light of Life! Sun of my soul! Elder Brother, Redeemer, Saviour, King! Thou art the Way, the Truth, the Life

“Thou art the Way, the Truth, the Life,
Teach us that way to know,
That Truth to keep, that Life to win,
Whose joys eternal flow.”

OUR PRESENT HEAVEN THROUGH THE CROSS.

By REV. HOWARD CROSBY, D.D.

Delivered in the 4th Avenue Presbyterian Church.

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."—Col. i. 12—16.

PAUL urges the Colossian Christians, and through them *all* Christians, to give thanks to their Heavenly Father for mercies already in hand. The wonders described in the text are *present* wonders wrought already in their experience. It is very true that the fulness of Christ's work for us will not be displayed until this earthly life is all over, and the heavenly life, freed from all that pollutes or contracts, is reached; when the processes are ended, and the result is achieved of a complete salvation; when the final overthrow and banishment of sin, the great disturbing cause, ensures the unhindered reciprocity of grace and glory. And so we ought to look forward to heaven, if not with impatience, at least with longing, because of the triumph of Divine love that there awaits the ransomed soul. But with all this Christ's salvation is not a future salvation.

Its *consummation* is future—the head-stone will then be brought forth with the shouting of "Grace, grace unto it!" but the mighty foundation is laid here—its walls have risen here story above story, and the heavenly glory shines from its growing structure. It is a very common mistake of Christ's people to forget their present comforts in their thoughts of comforts laid up in store for the other world. They live in faith that the Son of God

will save and glorify them, rather than that he *has* saved and glorified them. Their faith is like an old man's sight—they can see things afar off, but they cannot see things close by; and they need to become little children in faith, so as to see things just at hand, the *very present* salvation and abundant gifts of the Lord Jesus. The grace of gratitude would be certainly cultivated—would receive a wonderful impulse—if we should take into the hands and use ~~those~~ blessings of Christ's love which we *are* in the habit of seeing as a part of an indefinite future. The more of heaven we discount here the more grateful shall we be. And the power to discount heaven is far greater with us than we often suppose. Heaven is more state than place, and more heart than body, although eventually it will include all. The state and the heart are effected here by God's Word, and the right reception of that Word is the condition on which is based a more or less heavenly experience of the soul. Salvation is planted here and grows here, and we can, if we will, have here too some of its lower branches laden with rich fruit, although the higher may be only reached in the beautiful hereafter.

Our text summons us to the consideration of our present heaven, while it embraces within its scope the work of grace which has given us so priceless a possession.

First: *A present heaven.* Let us see what is said of it. "Which *hath* made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light—who *hath* delivered us and *hath* translated us—in whom we *have* redemption.

These past tenses show a work already performed—an end already attained. Our meetness, our deliverance, our translation, our redemption are accomplished facts. But what do these terms refer to? A work accomplished?

Yes, but *what* work? What meetness, and for what? A deliverance *from* what? A translation *to* what? A redemption how explained? Let us look at these thoughts in their order.

First: "Meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light," or, as I would render it, "fitted us to be partakers of the saint portion in the light." The saints of God are

to the unregenerate in this world as the Israelites were to the Egyptians. While every Egyptian household was shrouded in darkness, every Israelitish home was bathed in the light of heaven. The same fact exists in the spiritual condition of things now. A darkness far more deadly is now resting on every unconverted heart, and a light more heavenly is dwelling in every Christ-dwelling heart. In the midst of a physical darkness you can sit down and patiently wait in safety, but in a spiritual darkness this is impossible. The mind must ever be moving; it is going over new ground every minute, and if spiritual things are not discerned by it, if its spiritual eyesight is useless, its spiritual surroundings are to it as though they were not, then it is in imminent danger every minute of pitfalls and fatal surprises. The mind is not apt to be aware of its constant activity—its continual progressive movement. As on an easy railway you can scarcely believe you are moving along with the speed of a bird—indeed habit, added to the ease of the motion, makes you forget that you are moving at all—so our mental movements are so natural, that we are generally unaware of our perpetual movement in the spiritual world at a rate that may at any time, with conducing circumstances, produce a crash.

It is this which makes spiritual darkness—ignorance of God and things Divine, of grace and salvation, of Jesus and the Cross—a very dangerous thing. You are rushing like a steamer with a full head of steam through a rocky sea in the depths of a moonless, starless, cloud-covered midnight, and with an inestimable freight on board. Under such conditions darkness is terrible. If the conviction of this truth should seize upon you, my Christless hearer, you would cry for light, and forget everything else. The Christian heart is in the light, and so can understand your darkness. You, being in the darkness, cannot understand the Christian's light. We see your danger; you do *not*, neither do you see our safety. The light which we enjoy is the light of God's truth in Jesus Christ, accepted by our faith, and made greater or less according to the measure of that faith.

We are now partakers of that light. It is called the Saint's portion. It is God's gracious gift to those who will receive it, and they, by receiving it, are made saints, partakers of the Holy Ghost. Grace on God's side, faith on ours—these are the piers of the arch of salvation.

But what is meant by our being made *meet* to be partakers? Does this look to a human preparation for salvation and holiness? Does this respond to the heart's self-righteousness, and mark out a series of good works as the price of gaining the Saint's portion in the light? "*Meet* to be partakers."

Surely the meetness comes first before the partaking. Yes, but look at the words: "The *Father*, which hath made us meet to be partakers." There is no room for self-righteousness there. It is God's work. But how God's work? Let us look at the only other passage in the New Testament where the word is used, and learn from that. It is in 2 Cor. iii. 6. Our English version has it: "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament." Let me read it literally: "Who also hath fitted us to be ministers of the New Covenant."

Was the Apostle fitted for his ministerial work by natural goodness, virtue, or such like? He who calls himself the chief of sinners refuses such a suggestion. No, he was fitted for his work by toils, disappointments, trials, and providences of all kinds. Just so the Christian is fitted for the light by the kind action of God in his daily providence, cutting off worldly hopes by losses and bereavements, hedging us in from the world, and directing us through the force of Divinely ordered circumstances to the higher life and the things of God, His word and His spirit acting upon us *with* His providence to win our souls to Himself. This is God's fitting us to be partakers of the saint's portion in the light.

2. But God has done more than this: He has not only thus prepared the way for us, but He has accomplished the rescue: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness." There has been a conflict and a victory. Darkness is a power. From its iron grasp we have been rescued.

Who has fought and conquered? Not the poor prisoner of darkness. The intervention of a Divine power is clearly necessary, and is here expressly asserted. I do not care how this intervention is psychologically expressed. I do not care at all for the philosophical question of God's sovereignty and man's free agency. It is enough for me to know that God has done the work, and that my chains were stricken off by no power of my own.

The voice of the men freed from sin is this: "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake." It is God's sovereign grace which I rejoice in and which I magnify; and you, my unregenerate hearers, are well aware that you are free agents enough to call on God for His mercy upon you. In practice these metaphysics need not trouble either of us; it is only in speculation that they are puzzles, and the best way to avoid the puzzle is to quit speculation and attend to practice. We are finite intelligences, and speculations about the infinite will soon carry us beyond the limits of our mental equilibrium. God *has delivered* us from the power of darkness. Christian friends, the deliverance is complete. It is not a deliverance from *darkness*; we are not, though in the light, absolutely free from shadows; the text does not assert that we are delivered from darkness, but from the *power* of darkness. The tyranny which enslaved us is destroyed. Darkness is not our master, though it may be still our *troubler*. We recognize a superior master and protector, even while we may have some gloom fall upon us from the old sources. God's part is completely done. He has set us free from the power of darkness. Now, if after being set free we are foolish enough to go back and expose ourselves to insults and injuries from an old master, that's *our* fault, and not God's. The light shines on us, and we can enjoy as much of it as we will. Communion with God in prayer and the word and the intercourse of saints is open to us at all times. The amount of it which we use is a test of the amount of our desire to be utterly rid of the darkness. This darkness from whose dominating power God has freed us, and yet with whose molesting influences we tamper in our worldliness—

this darkness is not a darkness of the intelligence. If it were we might bear it; we might say, "Ignorance is bliss," without ever finding out the fallacy. But this darkness is one that *can be felt*; it will make itself known in the end by piercing the soul at the very nerve; it is a darkness of the moral nature, of the affections and will, which lie at the very citadel of being, which form the very core of personality. Disease here is disease in a vital; it cannot be shaken off by neglecting it, nor can you cauterize or amputate it. Spiritual darkness is disease, and if God's cure is rejected, it must have its course and destroy the soul. The reason you may not feel the agony now is that you are in a stupor—the world's opiate is taking effect—but when you are aroused from your dream, and see things as they are, the full conviction of your situation, with a heart estranged from God, will be a ceaseless and unmeasurable woe.

The third fact of our present heaven is this: "Hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." We are already delivered from the power of darkness—that is the negative side; we are also translated into Christ's kingdom—this is the positive side. There is no negation of sin except in Christ. There is no opposition to sin in the universe except that of Christ. There are those who think they are contending against some of sin's consequences, some of the miseries that sin has caused. The worldly philanthropist wishes to have men *happy*, the Christian philanthropist wishes to have men *holy*. Sin's dominion is called "the *power* of darkness," but Christ's dominion is called a "kingdom." Sin's power is tumultuous, chaotic, wild, unorganized. It is like the rushing of the conflicting winds or the meeting of the foaming billows. The soul that is under sin's power is beaten about of a tempest, but Christ's power is that of a well-ordered and peaceful kingdom, whose working is in Divine symmetry and beauty, in which the soul is satisfied and at ease. As it is the Father's dear Son, or "Son of his love," who sits upon the throne of this kingdom, so Divine love is the principle which binds all parts of this kingdom together, and forms it a kingdom of bliss.

4. Our text tells us that "we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins." The root of all our trouble has been removed—to wit, the condemning power of sin. The actual and overt commissions, the sinful words, the wicked and depraved thoughts, that have made up so much of our past history, are forgiven. As the word denotes, they are remitted, let go, discharged; they are utterly removed from us as accusers: in this sense they are remembered no more. In this complete forgiveness we understand *free grace*. In coming now before God, we come as sinners, but not as *condemned* sinners; we are *saved* sinners. With the love of Christ in our hearts, our sins cannot keep us from Him and His salvation.

We have now briefly glanced at the fact which causes us to stand on a rock—that God has already prepared the way, and then actually accomplished our rescue from the dark power of sin, and has made us happy subjects of the kingdom of Jesus, freely and fully remitting all our sins. This great fact gives us on earth even now a present heaven.

II. We have but a few minutes to note the *character of the working of that grace* which has given us so heavenly a possession. It is noted in the text by the words "redemption through his blood." The word "redemption" means a deliverance by the payment of a ransom, and the ransom is here stated to be the blood of God's dear Son, as it is again stated by the Apostle Peter: "Ye were redeemed not with silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." If there is any fact of revelation more conspicuous than another, more prophesied, more typified, more chronicled, more urged upon the believer's heart, it is the pouring out of Christ's blood as the price of our release from eternal death. The Old Testament proclaims from the very gate of lost Paradise that without the shedding of blood there is no remission. We may not fully comprehend the rationale of substitution in its details; we may not see why actual death was necessary, besides the living agony of our Lord; but with all this ignorance on our part we cannot deny that God's word teaches substitution, and the necessity

of Christ's actual death, in letters of light. "Christ *died* for our sins according to the Scriptures," says Paul. And again, "For this cause he is the mediator of the new covenant, that *by means of death* for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." It is for this reason that the Apostle wishes to know nothing but Jesus and *him crucified*. It is not the *life* of Jesus, glorious as that was; it is not the *sympathy* of Jesus, penetrating as that was and is; but it is the *death* of Jesus, which bears our sins and leaves us, who believe, free from their condemning load. That freedom we *now* have in the present kingdom of God's dear Son, the same Jesus risen as victor over death and ascended to his heavenly throne. Without that death of Christ there is no freedom either here or hereafter. Look, my hearer, on that strange scene at Golgotha; consider the mighty fact, the God-man dying in agony of body and soul, and then surely you cannot say, "*That* death is of no importance to me," and suppose that you can expect a pardon of your sin on the mere general principle of the Divine love. Oh! if you are right, why, *why* did Jesus have to shed his blood? Will you set up your little philosophy against the spoken and enacted revelation of God? Will you make light of all Christ's agonies? Will you in this way be guilty of the blood of the Lord? Will you thus count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing? You draw back from the Cross, and you have no heaven. *We* have found *our* heaven, at the Cross. It is just there where our sins are forgiven, and remitted, driven away by the Lamb of God who taketh away sin; it is just there we have found God's preparation consummated, and our deliverance effected from the fearful power of darkness.

Dear hearer, will you come with us into this light which shines from the Cross? or will you wrap your darkness around you as an eternal pall?

THE RICH MAN'S FOLLY.

BY BISHOP JANES.

Delivered in the Alanson M. E. Church, N.Y.

“And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully : and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits ? And he said, This will I do : I will pull down my barns, and build greater ; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years ; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee : then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided ? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”—
LUKE xii. 16—21.

IN this parable the Saviour describes the case of a certain personage, and then pronounces his verdict upon him. This verdict is, that he was a fool. Not that he was wanting in sense—he was not an idiot. The whole tenor of the parable shows he was a person of intellectual capacity. There was no lack of mental power in him. Neither was he a fool because he was rich. There is no wrong in that of itself. Some persons are heirs to property, and it is not foolish to accept the property if accepted for proper purposes and used in a proper manner. Religion makes men industrious, frugal, enterprising, and therefore naturally tends to the wealth of the person ; and this result, therefore, cannot be wrong, or even a mistake. The blessing of God makes rich, and certainly if His blessing makes us rich it is not foolish in us to be rich. Neither did this man's folly consist in the enlargement of business plans, for if business increases we must enlarge our plans. If the farmer's products multiply,

he increases his means of storing. Now there is nothing foolish in this arrangement; on the contrary, it is a judicious, natural arrangement. But his folly consisted, first, in his selfishness. He laid up treasures for himself—*for himself*—and *was not rich toward God*. Now this acquiring wealth for ourselves—for this sordid end that we may be called rich—that we may have the pleasure of counting over our money, of numbering our bonds and mortgages, of counting the houses we may own and the stores we have to rent, and of having it said of us when we die, “He was a millionaire”—the laying up money for these little, low, frivolous, vain purposes, is the most consummate folly. Our not being rich toward God may mean, not holding our wealth subject to His providential requirements, or may mean, not being rich in that faith or those Christian virtues—good works—which in His sight, God’s sight, are of great account.

This man’s folly, in the second place, consisted in his perversion of his possessions—of his treasures. Worldly things are given for worldly purposes—to promote our temporal comforts, our physical well-being, and to aid us in any enterprise, whether personal or social, private or public; but this individual perverted these temporal blessings to the use and excitement of his *soul*. Listen to his language: “I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up in store for many years; eat, drink, and be merry;” just as if his large bonds and mortgages, or the money these would produce, could satisfy his spiritual, immortal nature; as if these could give satisfaction to the claims of the heart, to the demands of his mental powers, to the aspirations of the spiritual nature within; just as if these temporal things could make the soul happy. What a capital error in his calculations! The spiritual must be satisfied with the spiritual, the moral with the moral, the intellectual with the intellectual, and these temporal things can only satisfy the physical—the mere claims of the body. And for an individual possessed of reasoning power to make such a calculation, to sing to his soul such a syren song, to indulge in such anticipations, is a foolishness so absurd that it would seem as if men

could not be found to imitate it; and yet in this city—I hope it is not true of this congregation—there are multitudes making the same calculations and acting on the same principles, and therefore manifesting this same folly. “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up in store, houses, barns, stock, lands; Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, and be merry;” a merry-making of the soul over these temporal things.

The folly of this person is further manifested in his not meeting his obligations to his soul. How expressive is this language: “This night thy soul shall be required of *thee*.” Many persons fail to perceive and appreciate their *personal* responsibility for their character. Some persons depend upon the piety and prayers of their parents to save them. Some persons depend upon the prayers of their pastor to save them. Others feel because they have a connection with the congregation, therefore the sympathies and intercessions of the Church will save them; and others fancy that because Jesus suffered death for every man, that his atoning, vicarious sacrifice on Calvary will avail for their eternal salvation. Now let me say all these calculations are vain. “Thy soul shall be required of *thee*.” No one else can answer for it—no one else can meet God at the judgment seat—no one else can obtain for you pardon, mercy, and sanctifying grace. It is true Jesus Christ accepted our guilt, and has by His offering made God to be just in justifying the sinner; but that sinner must believe in Christ. Jesus could die for us, atone for our sins, conquer death for us, open heaven to us, mediate for us; but He cannot repent or believe for us. We are responsible agents; we must believe or be damned. The minister can instruct, can sympathise with us, can admonish, can exhort us, can invite, can even beseech us to be reconciled to God; but he cannot repent for us, nor believe for us. He can point us to the Cross; but when we come once there, we ourselves are to behold the “Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world” with the eye of our faith, or we are lost. Our Christian parents can pray for us, and God hears their prayers, and in answer thereto, often our lives are preserved that

we may have additional space for repentance and turning to God, or a good spirit is, perhaps, given to awaken, enlighten and convict us; God answers their prayers to a certain extent—so far as He can without interfering with our personal responsibility; but even their prayers and tears, their days and nights of anxiety, cannot save us without our co-operation. In the earlier period of my ministry I knew this case. A very godly man had a very ungodly son. This good man was called suddenly away by death. The wild, wicked son was immediately sent for to come home and look upon the pale face of his deceased parent and to attend the funeral. He came into the room where his father was, looked upon his countenance, and immediately began to tremble. Soon he fell upon his knees and cried out, “O God, have mercy on me; I have no hope left but *thee*. I have been depending on the good prayers of my father to save me. Now he is gone. Now God have mercy on me.” And the removal of his father led to his conversion—led him at once to depend upon God alone, and now pray for himself. Thy soul shall be required of *thee*—of thyself, thyself only—thou, and *thou only*. Repent and believe, and lay hold on eternal life.

This man's folly is further seen in his confident calculation on long life: “Thou hast much goods laid up in store for *many years*.” Now when we remember what dying worms we are, how frail our being is, how fierce disease awaits men to push them to the tomb, how many accidents occur by which men are suddenly hurried into eternity; when we see on almost every block in our business streets the undertakers' signs hanging out, when we walk around, when we mingle in society and see these evidences of mortality, and when we see everywhere the badge of mourning, and see in ourselves our frailties, how absurd, how supremely foolish, for us to say, “Thou hast goods laid up in store for many years,” when we know not but that the breath we are now drawing may be the last one, that the pulse which is now beating may be the final one, the day now dawning upon us may bring a night not followed by *another day of probation*, when the Sabbath we *are now enjoying may be the last one*. We are liable each

day, each moment, to pass away to the great future beyond the grave. It is only a few weeks ago, in this city, a millionaire sat in council with other capitalists to arrange plans to increase their great wealth. Before another Saturday night he was in eternity. Whose, then, shall these things be, laid up in store for themselves? How many men of position and long standing in society were of late called suddenly away, at a few hours' notice only, to close their probation, to give up all the business of this world, and enter on the experience of the spirit world? How is it possible for any to say, no matter what our age, health, or circumstance, to themselves, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, and be merry"?

"This night thy soul shall be required of thee." If I were authorized to make this communication to this congregation to-day by such authority that they would credit it, if I could say, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee, to-night you must march into the presence of God, to-night you must give an account of yourself at the judgment seat, to-night your destinies for eternity are determined," O, what a change would come over your thoughts and feelings! how soon you would even fail to hear the preacher! You would call upon God for His mercy, and plead with Him to prepare you for this great transition from time to eternity. How very much less precious your money would seem if you were to die to-night and have no more opportunities to count it over and look at it! How trifling it would seem in your eyes unless you were holding it in trust for God; then the fact of having it would enhance its value. If some of you are holding it to advance the interests of the Church or humanity, then in the dying hour give thanks to God that he has given these talents for use. But to keep it up for yourself, and have it said you were rich, O, how pitiful, how foolish such a sentiment—how ridiculous such a course of action! Brethren, be rich toward God. Let us give Him the responsibility of our souls, so that we may be ready to die to-night, ready to give up what we have, under any circumstances; then life will be a boon and eternity a bliss. God ~~will~~ *you for Christ's sake.* Amen.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

BY REV. GEORGE H. HEPWORTH,

Delivered at the Church of the Disciples.

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want."—PSALM xxiii. 1.

THIS twenty-third Psalm has done incalculable good. It has helped many a heart and changed many a sorrow to joy. All through these centuries it has sung itself into our homes, and never once without awakening in the soul an echo responsive to its own faith and trust. When you are in a far country, and you see floating in the breeze the folds of your own dear flag; or, when among strangers, you listen to the martial strains of music with which you are familiar; or when, in tough-fibred manhood, in a moment of lull and rest between the hard work of every day, you catch the echo of some favourite song of your childhood, how every pulse thrills within you, and how cheerfully and gratefully, and yet sadly, you are borne back to the olden times, or carried across an invisible bridge that spans the ocean to your own home once more. So, I take it, when we are far from God and Christ, when we have wandered from the straight and narrow way which leads to the mountain top of heaven, when we are revelling in our own appetites, and in the midst of our own caprices and impenitence, or when our hearts are bowed down in sorrow, and everything is dark before us, and uncertainty, the old refrain of David's harp arouses the memories of our faith once more—kindles within the soul a new, unusual enthusiasm, and through our tears we look up to God, and from the midst of our darkness we reach up our hand to Him who was never yet unmindful of our sorrows and our joys, but who is the Shepherd of the whole human flock.

This idea of a present God is met with on every page of ancient history. The Israelites were peculiar for their unwavering trust in a Jehovah who was not far distant, whom they could consult on every extraordinary occasion, of whom they stood greatly in fear; because he was acquainted not only with the larger mechanism of the nation, but with all the doings of every household, and with the spring of motive in every man's heart; and in all wanderings hither and yonder, from Egypt to the glorious banks of the Jordan, they never took a step without first consulting Him who was never far away, and seeking advice and counsel from His lips.

Again, the Greeks were remarkable for their belief in an omnipresent and omniscient Deity. Nothing is more significant or more inspiring, in reading the history of those classical times, than the consciousness with which you will always be impressed, that no great warrior ever went into a fight without the feeling that the gods were witnesses to his bravery, and that in the pinch of battle, when it became necessary to put forth every energy, the gods would strengthen the arm that wielded the sword or held the spear; and many of the deeds of ancient bravery are due simply to the belief that the deities were present, helping, sustaining, and encouraging them.

When you look into the matter a little more closely, you find, not more to your surprise than satisfaction, that the untutored mind of the world naturally and instinctively believes in a God everywhere present, in a Deity not far off, but all round about us; in a Deity who witnesses every action, and who is aware of every thought and of every purpose. The clouds break in blackened thunder over their heads, and they tremble, not because it is a natural force expanding itself, but because it is an angry Deity about to take vengeance for some misdeed. They wander into the woods, and the deep darkness and the awful silence there impress themselves upon the uncultivated mind and susceptible heart of the savage as a present God presiding over the shadows and watching every footstep of those devotees who claim to worship in his temple.

And so I come to say this morning, my friends, that a belief in Providence is an absolute necessity of the religious life; that there can be no religion except what is based upon that fact. It is the corner stone of all faith. It is the pediment that holds up your trust, your confidence, your power of endurance, your manhood and your womanhood. Without that faith you are nothing and you can do nothing, but with it there is nothing you cannot do and nothing which you cannot endure. But what we want in these latter times is a reasonable theory concerning Providence. The ideas of the olden time are romantic; they are fanciful; they are poetic; they are beautiful and rhythmical, but they are not solid enough to base our faith upon; and yet you can easily see that in trying to so form a sustained theory of God's Providence over the world and over human life there are a thousand obstacles in the way. It is very difficult to talk about God in any way. He is so great, and we so small, it is hard for human thought to measure His plane. He is so high up and so broad, and we are so short-sighted and so narrow-minded, that mistakes are almost inevitable. As well might a buzzing fly try to form some conception of this building by winging its way from pillar to pillar, from roof to floor, as for us, in our littleness, to attempt to measure God or to get hold of any conceivable outline of His plans respecting us, or His designs concerning the universe; and I am inclined to think, after all, that the blind faith of childhood is the most beautiful thing in the world. So soon as we begin to reason, that moment we get into a snarl. And yet the mind will not rest. It must be satisfied concerning all these questions, because out of the satisfying of the intellect oftentimes the memory will move, and so long as the mind is in doubt the moral nature is torpid; but when the mind is satisfied of the fact, the moral nature seems to well up, to rise to the emergency, and to send forth into life influences sustained with the judgment.

You can easily see, then, that a great responsibility rests upon you because of brains, the power of judging between right and wrong; and *your judgment, the very holy of holies of manhood—*

you must tread within its narrow, sacred precincts with unshod feet and uncovered heads. Use mind reverently, not haughtily, like an emperor exercising a despotic sway everywhere, but like a little child, groping its way through the dark, and always grateful for every pencilling of new light upon his path.

The theories concerning Providence, then, that are extant among us to-day, exercising influence over human nature, may be resolved into two different ones. Concerning these, my dear friends, I intend, in my own plain fashion, to speak to you this morning, because as you look upon God, so you look upon life. If God is beautiful, so is life. If God is a far-off Being, then are all moral duties far-off, for they are indistinguishable from God Himself. If God is close to you, then the moral nature kindles into enthusiasm; and if you can be made to feel, wheresoever you go, that your going and doing are in the mind of God, you will be careful; and if you feel that in your business, when you buy and sell, God is there to witness the honesty of your transactions, then you will be careful; and if in your homes, when sorrows come, and trials which the heart finds difficult to bear, you feel that the Everlasting Hand is under you, and the Everlasting Arm all round about you, and the Everlasting Presence of the Father is within the magic circle of your household, to give courage and good cheer and help and faith, then everything you own is turned toward heaven; life itself is robbed of its gloom; the tear-drops from the eye baptise the cheek with the flush of faith, and the sob dies away, or lives changed into an echo which seems to say, "Thy will, O God, not mine, be done." So important is it, my dear friends, that we should have right views of God and God's connection with the world, and with the human soul.

The first theory, then, I desire to speak of is this: that the Almighty made the world cycles ago, just as a workman makes a watch, and then left it to run itself, to take care of itself; that during those six days or those six ages God finished his work and then left it; that since that time there is nothing for Him to do—*no necessity for interference, none for supervision, none for even*

casual superintendence. The universe then is a mere machine—only that, and nothing more. Life is a journey from birth to death. You must learn the laws of life, and you often learn them by punishment and by pain; and when you break the law, moral or physical, the consequence is inevitable. It is a world of laws. Stand on the track of God's engine, and you will get run over. You may say, "But it was night, and I could not see the train coming; it was stormy, and I could not hear the bell ringing." No matter, it comes rumbling along the down grade, and if you are on the track you are ground to powder, and there is no power in the earth, or in the heavens, or in the yonder, anywhere, that either can or will take care of you, that either can or will pity you, that knows anything about you. You are only a chance atom on the great flood-tide, and that is all. If you hit against a sunken rock, down to the bottom you go, and God neither knows nor cares. You can easily see that such a theory make an ice-house of a man's heart. It chills his moral nature. He becomes callous to everything beautiful and grand. His only development is in the direction of sharpness and shrewdness. He learns law so far as he can, then he dodges it. If he obeys, it is without one single pulse of gratitude in his being. It is as the slave obeys his master, because the whip hangs over his bare back; if he does not, that whip comes down to score the flesh, while your overseer is all round and about you, omnipresent and omniscient, a detective force to take you in your guilt, so sharpsighted it will find you wherever you go, so cruel-hearted when it catches you it will crush you ruthlessly in its clutches. According to that theory, then, the world is all round about us, but God is absent. He is enjoying His holiday after the hard work of creation. He is taking His everlasting rest, and the Sabbath on which He rests is infinitely longer than the six days during which He worked. He is sleeping in some of the palaces of the eternities. His eyes are closed to you, His ears are deaf to you. He sleeps soundly, and He'll sleep on and on until the last atom is annihilated, until matter resolves itself into the nothing from whence it sprang.

The idea of the fatherhood of God, you see, becomes an impossibility. Indeed, there is no relation between you and the Infinite, any more than between a tree and stone, between a clod and a granite boulder, and God. You are simply so many atoms. To be sure you have a conscience, are thoughtful, and can pray, but these attributes and powers only add poignancy to your grief, make you wish you were unconscious like the brutes, and not look forward to heaven or breathe aspirations after higher things; make you feel that you have not the sympathy of heaven or heaven's King. I hate that theory. It is extant throughout the community. It is to-day exerting a baleful influence upon religion and religious institutions, and it is false because it is baleful. That is the everlasting logic of events; whatever helps you to a higher life through the best standard of measurement you can discover, is likely to be true; whatsoever hurts you is false: whatsoever lifts you to enthusiasm, makes you more favoured as father, friend, business man, is likely to be true; what chills, makes you cold, careless, and selfish, is likely to be false. So I say this theory, though its influences are scattered abroad throughout the world, is untrue, because it hurts men's souls.

Then I turn to the next and the better theory. It is this that God did not finish His work when the Sabbath day began. It was only begun at that time, and He is hard at work throughout creation at this moment; that He has been hard at work (I use the term reservedly) since the first day, when He said, "Let there be light;" and He will continue to be hard at work until creation itself has arrived at perfection. It says that Deity is a labouring Deity, as Christ said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work"—God present in the winds that blow, in the storms that break above our heads, in the law of gravity that keeps every atom in its place, in the ebb and flow of the tide, in the growth of the grass, in the blossoming of the flowers, in all nationalities, in all human ways—God everywhere, not by a figure of speech, but actually present; conscious of every *thought*, of every word, of every deed surrounding you to such

an extent that the Apostle did not exaggerate when he said, "In Him we live and move and have our being." God pervades all space. God has no law. He will do at any time whatever He sees it right should be done, and interfere with His own usual mode of operation whenever a new necessity comes to the surface. That is the God in which we believe; that is the God revealed by Christ; that is the God that inspires the heart with enthusiasm divine, and makes it willing to work, to endure, and always ready to say, "His will is better than mine." And so far as you and I are concerned, brethren, we are at work with Him; are in partnership with the Almighty, so to speak. We have our part of creation to work in; we have our talents, our means, our places; and we shall be held responsible some day, by God, for the toil of our own hands, for the labour of our own lives; and the end which He has in view is simply your good, your education, your development—nothing else. Every event of life points its finger to that end. If you have joy, use joy for growth; if you have woe, regard woe as an opportunity for development. Believe, with every fibre of your being, that you are surrounded by the everlasting love of the Father. Then work with zeal and trust Him.

Now, then, if you ask wherein I find the proof of this, of the truth of what I have said, I answer, I find it, just as the proof of the falsehood of the other theory, in human experience. Brethren, I know that in my life there is no law except the law of God's love, and mine is not different from yours. There is no human heart untouched which is not pervaded by an unseen power moulding events—not as you would have anticipated, changing your best laid plans—turning upside down the devices of man—altering your whole arrangements. We believe there is a Providence in every man's career :

"A Divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them as we will,"—

and that, however man may propose, it is God, in love, who, after all, disposes. I think *there is* a feeling pervading the whole

community that each man is in the hand of God, depending upon God, and ought to obey Him and find his supremest happiness in obedience, and nothing less. It proves what I said, that God is present; and when we pray, there is no law to be changed, for God has promised to hear our prayer—and God's will is law—and when we pray out of our great gloom or gladness, the words go into the infinite heart of the Father. The prayer, the petition, is taken into consideration, and, if right, granted; and if wrong, refused. Precisely as we did when children, so we do to God. In our littleness we went with a half fear connected with the request that lay close to our designs and our hearts—with half trembling lips, that asked for the favour, not knowing whether it would be granted or not. The mother or the father heard patiently or quietly to the end. Then came the moment of dread and suspense. How we looked into the parent's face—listened to catch the first words from those decisive lips, and, when the verdict came, if in our favour, how the whole heart burst up into gladness; if against, we were compelled to feel that they knew more than we did, that in the end it was all right. Just so in our relation with God.

God Himself is the only law in the universe; His present will the only law we know anything about. Go to Him humbly, with trembling lips and faltering steps, but go to Him, and He will hear to the very last words, and if right to grant your request, He will grant it; and if wrong, He will refuse. Then feel in your soul that the Parent is stronger than you are, and that somehow it will prove for your good that He said "No" instead of "Yes." What you want, then, practically, is to trust God, and not yourself—to throw yourself on His will, and not put yourself in open rebellion. If we stand before law in the spirit of obedience, everything will work harmoniously; if in the spirit of rebellion, everything is against us. The secret of success consists in a conscious, willing, ready obedience to the known and revealed laws of God.

Now, my dear friend, do not say there is no Providence *because* you cannot see it. How many men and women there

are in the world who believe only what they can see and feel—
are not sure of what faith teaches them, who are only sure after
ocular demonstration; how many men and women in the midst
of a tough bereavement, in open rebellion against God! How
many of you have told me, when I have come to your houses
and found you bowed down by sorrow, “I don’t see why
this should have come; I have looked my life over, and find
nothing that merits such chastisement as this.” My friend, you
are in open rebellion to the will of God; you are demanding an
insight into the plans of the Most High, which you will never
get. No matter what comes—failure in business, disappoint-
ment of all your plans, death of child, sickness all through
your family, poverty staring you in the face—it is your busi-
ness, while working hard to remove all these troubles, and while
doing your utmost to get rid of them, to feel that, after all,
they are for the best; that they are calculated, if used in the
spirit of Christianity, to make a sweetness of fervour you have
never enjoyed, a richness of trust and duty and confidence you
have never received. Of this is born a glimpse of heaven (the
best one ever gets on the earth), as when one shuts his eyes in
the midst of the dark, and says, “Will you lead me, as I cannot
find my own way?” and then, instead of feeling all around to
see that you do not stumble against anything, having once
caught hold of the hand, you walk firmly. You know there is
an angel there; that God is there, and no mistake in it. Did
you ever look at the wrong side of a piece of tapestry? Often
in human experience the wrong side is the only side we are
permitted to see. Look at it in rich folds before your eyes! All
the colours make up simply one everlasting jumble; no plan in
it at all. It is a fabric without a thought, without a purpose;
the ends are all loose. Go round to the other side; take hold of
the curtain; lift it out; look at the figure. It is perfect there.
There is a beautiful rose-bud where on the other side it is simply
red and white mingled confusedly; here a delicately tinted
green leaf, and at this side only one great jumble; and that is
all. Well, *brethren*, in all human experience God stands that

side of the tapestry, you on this side. Let Him do as He likes. The fabric, when completed, will be beautiful. Do your work faithfully; ask no question; make no reply; be faithful unto death; obey; and though life itself seem floating from your sight, and is but one great tangle, one great snarl, one great confusion of colour, yet get to heaven. Look on the other side; see that the figures are all perfect—all complete there; then raise our songs of thanksgiving that His will was stronger than ours, and overrode ours; while in our hearts we feel a poignant regret that we could ever feel His work poorly done, and our way better than His. Shall I say to you, dear friends, trust Him always, and especially in your deepest grief, when men's hearts fail and humanity is insufficient to bear you up? Do you remember that little story of the chamois hunter of Switzerland? Wandering one day over the Alps, he made a mis-step, and fell more than a hundred feet to the very bottom of one of those horrid crevices in the ice. It was impossible for him to get up; the sides were too slippery; there were no means of climbing. He cried out ever so loud, but no human ear could hear. There was nothing but absolute starvation—death before him. What could he do? The water came pouring down in an everlasting flood. He followed the stream until he entered a great cavern, high-arched, ice-ribbed. There the water gurgled and boiled and disappeared. He could see no exit. There was evidently one somewhere, for that living stream found its way out. There was but one thing for him to do. He looked up at the blue sky, commended himself to God's protection, and then, with a strong effort, threw himself bodily into that boiling, gurgling stream, and disappeared. A moment after the struggle he found himself on the outside, thrown on the green grass of the valley of Chamouni, the noonday sun shining above his head, and the blooming flowers of the mountain about him. When I read the story I thought it an exact type of the human life heavenward. Often, when walking over the ice-fields of our own experience, we make a mis-step which precipitates us into the deep crevice of *great misfortune*, bereavement, or death. It is impossible to

back to the old position, but the river of love rolls its ever-
g flood over the craggy mountain top of frozen life. Fol-
low. The struggle may be a hard one, but throw yourself in
trust blindly to God. When you hear the voice from
above saying, "Throw yourself in!" then, though darkness be
about you; though the mind cannot take the situation in
; though there be nothing but gloom and uncertainty con-
cerning things, trust God. Hurl yourself into the vortex of His
Will. Say (and mean it too), "Thy will, O God, not mine, be
done." You will find that when the flood has nearly stifled you,
at the same moment been bearing you on, underground it
comes, through darkness, but then at last it brings you in its
safe through to the Vale of Chamouni, the green grass of
new life, surrounded by the flowers of faith, with the canopy
of God's protecting power above your heads. If we have faith
in God, all will come right at last. God be thanked for that.

THE ESSENTIAL IN RELIGION.

BY REV. WAYLAND HOYT,

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"Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."—JOHN vi. 37.

PLUCK a green leaf from a bough and look at it. That leaf, science tells us, is the typical tree. The tree is built upon the pattern of that leaf. The tree is only the leaf expanded, and with its various parts altered to suit new requirements; but the idea manifest in the leaf is the idea according to which the tree is made and shaped. For instance, science tells us that the seed—the starting-point of life to the tree—is only a leaf rolled tight and changed in tissue and in contents, and so fitted for its special uses. The tree-trunk is only the leaf-stem made to take columnar form, and greatly lengthened and strengthened and enlarged. All the mingling mass of branch and bough and twig, lifting their manifold tracery against the sky, is but the reproduction and increasing of the delicate tangle of veins striking through the green substance of the leaf. In short, the tree is only the leaf cut in larger pattern. Everything in the huge tree is adjusted to the method of the little leaf. In the leaf you have the tree in germ and type.

So it is, it has seemed to me, with this short text I have read to you, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." It is the typical gospel. In this text we have the whole great gospel in germ and type. The entire system of the revelation of salvation is shaped after the pattern of this text. All that

there is in that, extended and enlarged and variously applied, is germinally folded up in this. The whole gospel is but the outgrowth and the blooming of this seed. Teach a man but this one short sentence, and in effect you teach him all that God has told us of the way leading to salvation and the heavenly city.

Once a caravan was crossing to the North of India, numbering in its company a missionary of the Cross. The heat was smiting, the way toilsome. An old and feeble man sank down exhausted, and was left to perish on the road. The missionary went to him, and, kneeling at his side, whispered, "Brother, what is your hope?" With difficulty the dying man faltered forth only these words: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," and in the effort died. How or when could this seeming heathen have gotten this gospel? Just then was seen a bit of paper grasped tightly in the dead man's hand. It was but a single Bible leaf with these words printed on it. It was little, but the whole gospel was crowded into it. Thus the man had seized the good news of God. Such is the text to-night. Get it, and in a most true sense you get all.

And now, with the light of this text falling on us, I have three points to which I ask your attention to-night:—

First, tried by this text, let us see what true religion is.

Second, tried by this text, let us see how we may gain a true religion.

Third, as suggested by this text, let us behold the proof of the possession of a true religion.

First, then, see, in the light of this text, what true religion is. Approach this matter negatively. Exclude, first of all, mistaken notions from it. And so I say, in the light of this text, *true religion cannot consist in any feeling of moral fitness*. The very words, "Him that cometh unto me," imply a passage out of dependence upon self to dependence on another. What need of coming to Christ if the man's own nature be morally sufficient for itself? There is nothing so deceptive and delusive as this placid and serene consciousness of moral fitness spreading its dangerous calm over the breasts of men. Many a man says, "I

do not feel specially sinful, therefore I am not sinful ;" a most misleading conclusion from a most misleading premise. They tell us that in the Arctic regions, when a man travelling across the wide sweep of the Arctic snows has endured the terrible tortures of the cold until the chill has struck the vitals, that then, though there had been exquisite pain before, all pain ceases, and the man becomes as comfortable as he would be sitting in the cabin of the ship beside the glowing stove. "Ah!" he says, "I am no longer freezing, I am warm; let me sleep; let me sleep; I do not feel cold, therefore I am not cold; even the snow is warm; let me lie down upon it and sleep." The terrible truth is, the nerves are so bitten with the cold they have lost sensation. If the man sleep so, that sleep is only the sure prophecy of death. The man's feeling is no test of his real condition.

So may it be also with the soul. The sense of moral fitness is no test of moral fitness. The spiritual sensibilities may be so benumbed by sin that they lose all power of indicating the true condition of the soul: that is the terrible doom and death of sin. For see how it is. Listen to me, I pray you. We find ourselves so constituted as that we stand in various relations—in relations toward God and our fellows. Conscience is that power in us by which we become aware of the obligations arising from these relations. Standing in certain relations toward God and toward my fellows, there spring out of these relations certain duties toward God and toward my fellows. Conscience is that power which stands within me and says, "Being in such relations, you ought to perform such duties as spring out of them." Now, a perfectly constituted man would be a man cognizant of all relations in which he stood to other beings (the relations of love and reverence toward God, the relations of helpfulness toward his fellow men), and who would also hold in himself a conscience sensitive to all obligations springing out of such relations, and impelling into such conduct as should discharge them. There would be the most perfect adjustment between the inward and the outward for such a man. Knowing

all obligation and meeting all obligation, he would be completely righteous, and heaven would be his due; he would have kept the law, and the hand of the Infinite must hasten to open the gates of heaven for him. He would have won heaven.

But now suppose the man to be *imperfect*, ignorant of many of the relations in which he is set, and holding in himself an imperfect conscience—a conscience not sensitive to the obligations arising from such relations—and which conscience, therefore, does not impel him into such courses of conduct as shall discharge them. Is the man, thus unknowing and insensible, guilty or guiltless? Does he really have moral fitness, or does he *only seem to himself to have moral fitness*, just as the man really freezing to death seems to himself to be enwrapped in warmth?

Well, if the man do not know the relations in which he stands to God and to his fellows, *and have not the means of knowing them*, he is, of course, guiltless; but if he have the means of knowing them, and yet has not improved those means of knowing, *he is verily guilty*. That is clear now and evermore.

Which is our case, O friends? Do we know our duty? And if we do not, are we helplessly ignorant, or wilfully ignorant? If we stay in the darkness till we lose our sight, so that we cannot see the sun, whose fault is it, God's or ours? Have we used the light which God has streamed upon us as we should—the light of the Bible, the light of prayer? Are we not ignorant of duty, not because we could not help it, but because *we would not*?

Does not Paul tell us that even the heathen are without excuse, because they might have seen the light of God in nature, and yet they would not? Is not our very ignorance our guilt? Here is a man who keeps on drinking. He cannot help it. You say he cannot help it, but does that lessen his responsibility? Not one whit. Why? Because he himself has thrust himself into such condition. So we might have been wise towards duty, and yet are often wilfully ignorant of it. We have thrust ourselves into a state of ignorance.

But this imperfect man is not only ignorant of duty, he is also insensible to the obligation of duty. His conscience is imperfect. Is he guilty or guiltless here? That, of course, depends upon the cause of the imperfection of his conscience. If he have not himself damaged his conscience, he is, of course, guiltless; but if the man has shattered his conscience with his own hand, then he is verily guilty for possessing a shattered conscience. Says the poet Burns, of conscience:—

“Its slightest touches—instant pause—
Debar a’ side pretences,
And resolutely keep its laws,
Uncaring consequences.”

Who of us has done it? Who of us has never, when conscience said “Thou oughtest,” answered “I will not”? Who of us has not thrust conscience into prison, and kept her there so long confined that she has paled and weakened in the darkness and the dampness, until she has no longer had strength to speak to us? Who of us does not possess an imperfect conscience, rendered imperfect by our own wilfulness?

Not until we are sure we know all the relations we possibly can know in which we stand toward God and toward our fellows; not until sensitive in conscience to every obligation rising out of these relations; not until sure we have discharged them through absolutely righteous conduct—only then can we trust in any feeling of moral fitness; only then can we be certain that our feeling of moral fitness arises out of a moral fitness which is real; that it is not the benumbing of the cold, rather than the glow of genuine warmth; that it is not delusive death, rather than the calm and comfort of eternal health. Anyhow, the great Christ does not recognize your moral fitness; He says, “Come to me; you need me.”

But then, again, in the light of this text, true religion cannot consist in the observance of any external ritual. “Come to me,” says Christ. Men are always ready to substitute the material for the spiritual. The fruitful source of the corrup-

tions of Christianity has been this constant tendency to put *form* in the place of *faith*. The Emperor Constantine would not suffer himself to be baptized until just before he died, that so he might have the chance of sinning, and also the chance of washing his sins away in what he thought to be the magical baptismal waters, just before he should be called to meet his God.

The other day I read a story. A Romish priest in the South had gained a negro convert. He had baptized him, and, according to the custom, had changed his name from Tom to Adam. But one Friday, the priest entering his cabin, found him feasting upon beef instead of piously eating the orthodox Friday fish. The priest took him to task at once. But the man answered, "Massa, dat no beef, dat fish. You sprinkle me, and cross me, and call me Adam instead of Tom. Mo sprinkle him, and cross him, and call him fish instead of beef. Him not beef, him fish." So senseless, exactly, is any trust in external ritual: no outward manipulation, by the most consecrated fingers, can touch and change the inward nature.

There is many a man who, in his last moments, grasps at a Protestant communion or at a Papal eucharist, that so, somehow, by some legerdemain of grace, his black soul may be whitened into fitness for entrance upon the heavenly state. It has been the struggle of the ages to get men to see that the religious shell is worthless, unless there be also present the religious kernel; that all external forms are useless, except as they express and represent an internal and vital faith; that saintly clothing simply cannot make a saint.

It is an easy matter to be baptized; it is another thing to feel the sorrow of penitence, to shatter the shackles of evil habit, to send forth the soul in the uplifting of faith. It is an easy matter to taste the bread and wine; it is another thing altogether to partake spiritually of the bread of life, and to get the soul bathed in the cleansing stream of the Redeemer's blood. The penitent thief had never been laved in baptism, nor had he ever touched *the consecrated supper*, yet that same day he

entered Paradise with Christ. Nothing outward can touch the deep and inward trouble. Christ does not call to ritual; His word is, "*Come to me.*"

But then, again, in the light of this text, true religion cannot consist in a simple orthodoxy. "Come unto me," says Christ; not to your shapely creed. A good creed is like good bread: if the bread be not eaten and digested, it cannot scare starvation and death away. Jean Paul Richter tells us of a German who had learned the Lord's Prayer in every tongue, but had never once prayed with it. There is many a man who, if you examine him to what length you will, you shall find clear and strong in all the truth that is distinctly evangelical, yet he may be at the utmost remove from a real love to Christ. You cannot predicate true religion upon the extent and variety of religious knowledge. When he was alive, I talked once with John Allen, and found him doctrinally right enough to satisfy, so far, the strictest of churches. It is the distinguishing feature of the Christian system, as Christ taught it, that it does not place the foundation of salvation in the adoption of certain opinions or of certain habits. Under it, the believer is not simply the man who maintains the doctrine of the Trinity, or adds to this the doctrine of Justification by Faith. Faith in these, important as they are, does not necessarily compel the belief that a man is a Christian. Still sounds out the Saviour's call to the man the most ignorant among the sons of Adam, "Him that cometh unto me."

What, then, is a true religion? This, O friends! nothing less than this, and nothing more: "Him that cometh unto me," says Christ. *A living relation with the living Christ*, that is a true religion, that is *the essential in religion*. Christ is moral fitness. Christ is better than ritual. Christ is knowledge. Everything in the gospel is gathered up into and expressed in Christ. He is the gospel. He is the good news of God. He is our peace. He is our life. He is the hope of glory. He of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. We are made *partakers of Christ*. The contact of the

personal soul with the personal Christ, that is the true religion. He who has not that has not true religion, whatever else he may possess; he who has that has true religion, whatever he may be without. That one word *me* is the whole gospel, just as the one sun is all our light; if a man have the sun, he must have the day. If a man have Christ, he must have the gospel.

But then, in the second place, in the light of this text, see the method of gaining this personal religion: "Him that *cometh* unto me," says Christ. Look unto me a moment. Multitudes are thronging Christ. Men have never known before so wondrous a teacher, whose words so reach their hearts, and carry with them such fitness to their needs, such conviction and such plenitude of help. He is strangely magnetic to men. They are drawn to Him by an irresistible compulsion. But look yonder—what is that strange object crawling towards Him? It is so muffled in sackcloth, you cannot discern the face; the step is difficult and feeble, as though all the strength were gone and every movement painful. He can scarcely drag himself along. Listen! a cry reaches you: "Unclean! unclean!" Yes, it is a leper, and as he approaches you, you get here and there a glimpse, through the folds of sackcloth, of his terrible condition: spots of hideous red blotch all his face; the hair of the brow, and lids, and beard, has fallen off; the eyes are fierce and staring; some of the joints of his hands are gone. He has come from some dismantled dwelling, or from some cave in the rocks of the wilderness, or from lying among the tombs. What does he want here? Does he not know that he is a doomed and excommunicated man? Does he not know that he is only fit for solitude? No home can welcome him. Wife and children may not even minister to him. To touch him would be defilement and contagion, and yet he is drawing nearer still. He means to mingle in the crowd. See, they make way for him, and draw their robes aside, that they may not touch him by any chance. He is going straight for the great Teacher. See, he stands before Him. Hear him; he prays, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Look, the Teacher touches *him*. Who would touch a leper? Yet the

Teacher does, and he speaks kindly to him at the same time, words that we can hear: "I will, be thou clean." Why, just see the man—he is as sound and as whole as any one around. You can only know him by his sackcloth. His skin is smooth and fair and clear. All the blotches are gone from his face, all the fires of the leprosy are put out. Everything wanting in him is restored. Why, the man is whole. Behold, O friends! what "coming" means. Just that is coming. That leper knew he was a leper, he knew he could not cure himself; he knew that Christ could cure; and so, in his deep helplessness, he asks Him, and Christ does cure. Thus any man who feels his need and knows he cannot help himself, and is sure that Christ can help, and just asks him to—that man comes, and in Christ gains the whole blessing of the gospel, receives the true religion, just as the leper received his cure.

A poor wild Irish boy, taught in a mission school in Ireland, was asked what was meant by saving faith. "Grasping Christ by the heart," said he. The truest answer possible; and faith is only another word for coming. The man who grasps Christ by the heart, does come, and that is to gain the religion.

And now, in the third place, as suggested by this text, behold the proof of the possession of the true religion. The proof does not consist in an old experience carefully preserved and laid away in memory, but out of which there spring no present love, and prayer, and service. There is no present contact with Christ in that. There is nothing vital in it. It is as dried and shrivelled as last year's corn husks—and just as useless.

Nor does the proof of the possession of religion consist in a present release from the fear of death, as so many people think. Many of the sweetest saints of God have walked through all their lives in the bondage of this fear. But when, at last, the shadows of the valley gathered, they have found them all silver lined with the radiance streaming from Christ's presence; and, in the strength and joy of His radiance, they have conquered death. While you live you need not the grace for death, but the *grace for life*. When death comes, grace with which to meet it *shall be vouchsafed*. As thy day is, thy strength shall be.

The proof does not consist either in the present fervent glow of feeling, and a quick release from burdens, and a strangely songful heart, and a sudden impulse of a new affection, and a fresh light in the sun, and the earth imparadised. Such things as these may accompany the reception of religion, but they are not infallible tests of its possession.

What, then, is the test, in the light of our text? Just this: the present proneness of the soul upon these words of Christ: "I will in no wise cast out."

It was during a revival, I was waiting by a man to help him if I might.

Said he, "I know I am a sinner. I feel the burden of my sin. I want to be a Christian, but I don't how to be. I am like a man feeling around in the dark. I don't know where to step."

Said I, "Do you believe that the Lord Jesus tells you the truth, and will never deceive you?"

"Certainly I do," he answered. "I haven't the slightest doubt about that."

"You are absolutely sure," I asked, "that the Lord Jesus cannot lie?"

"Absolutely sure," he said.

"Well, now," I replied, "since you are so certain that Christ never can deceive you, why won't you take Him exactly at His word? He tells you this word any way: 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' Now coming is just the yielding up of your sin, forsaking it, and consecrating your soul to Him. Don't you suppose that if you do your part of it, it is perfectly certain that Christ will do His part—receive you—never cast you out?"

"I think it must be so," he answered.

"Well now," I asked again, "as far as you know yourself, do you thus come?"

He waited a minute, and then said solemnly, "As far as I know myself, I do."

"Can you not, then," I answered, "just believe that promise,

let your faith fasten on that word as a word for you, 'I will in no wise cast out'?"

"There was absolute stillness for a moment, then the man looked up suddenly and exclaimed: "Why, is that all?"

"That is all," I answered.

"Why," said he slowly, as if speaking to himself, "then—I think—I must be a Christian."

"My brother, you are a Christian," I answered joyfully.

Thus did the test of the possession of the true religion appear in this man. He threw the whole energy of his soul upon the promise, "I will in no wise cast out." When a man does that, he gains religion.

Can we not all do that, and thus be saved?

Said James Durham (a minister in Glasgow), on his death-bed, to a friend, "Brother, for all that I have preached and written, there is but one Scripture I can remember or dare grip to. Tell me if I dare lay the weight of my salvation upon it: 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'" This was the answer: "You may depend upon it, though you had a thousand salvations at hazard." That "*in no wise*" is a double negative—I will not, no, I will not cast out; and in whatever darkness or sense of sinfulness or agony of remorse, or out of whatever depth of evil the soul coming to Christ lays grip to that, that soul is saved infallibly, and not life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate that soul from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord. Coming and thus just resting on this word, that is being a Christian. The personal contact with the personal Christ, that is true religion; that is *the essential* in religion.

O friends! why will you not come to Christ? Is it because you are afraid of ridicule and what others may say? "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed."

Is it because of the inconsistencies of Christians? "Every man shall give account of himself to God."

Is it because you are not willing to give up all to Christ?
"What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and
lose his own soul?"

Is it because you are thinking you will do as well as you can,
and that God ought to be satisfied with that? "Whosoever
shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is
guilty of all."

Is it because you are postponing the matter without any definite
reason? "Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou
knowest not what a day may bring forth."

Is it because you fear you will not be accepted? "Him that
cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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THE
HISTORY
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THE
CITY
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"BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART."

BY REV. EMORY J. HAYNES,

Hanson Place M.E. Church, Brooklyn.

"Blessed are the pure in heart."—MATT. v. 8.

THE traveller from Jerusalem northward on the road to Tiberias, descending from the heights of Mount Tabor, notes upon the undulating plain before him a curious double-peaked hill. It rises only fifty or sixty feet above the surrounding level, and slopes down on the eastern side to the lowlands of Gennesaret. It is called the "Horns of Hattin," and is the traditional pulpit of the Sermon on the Mount. How peaceful was the scene that afternoon in May when those sweet words, so oft since then repeated, first broke upon this earthly air! The great round sun of the orient hung golden in the early afternoon's decline, touching the most distant landscape into beauty. Far across the valley the white walls of Capernaum glistened in its rays, and, below, the lake like a rare jewel in settings of amphitheatred hills. Then Christ upon the grassy knoll; the bearded, weather-beaten ring of disciples at His feet; the wide multitude standing or sitting on the grade below; and then the great silence, save now and then a woman's "Hush!" to her babe, or an old man's cough, or a smothered "Amen" of approval, as He opened His mouth with—what word? What word was the first from the King of kings to rebels—from Purity

to the impure? "Blessed," and again, "Blessed," and again and again, till nine times it sprang from His lips. Who were the blessed, think you? Ah! there's the point; for if there was one sentiment spread more widely than all others through that crowd, it was the hot and eager hope of every loyal Jewish heart for national deliverance; that the throne of Solomon might stand again upon its feet, and the banners of Israel flutter the eagles of Rome. They who were down-trodden dreamed again of power, they who were poor dreamed to become rich.

How old is that dream of blessedness consisting solely in earthly good! Go, ask him, the toiling merchant of middle life, "Sir, who is blessed?" "The man who owns a whole square, and lives magnificently in the centre of it." Ask the young clerk, "Whom do you judge blessed?" "The fellow who works five hours a day for a cool \$3,000." Ask the politician: "The man whose party is in." The sick: "The well." The mourner: "He who has no graves." Ask the plumed warrior who, 1,700 years later, on these very knolls of Hattin, made 3,000 Frenchmen victors over 250,000 Turks (aye, Napoleon) "Who's blessed?" and the reply from all is the same: "The man of earthly gains and goods." How different Jesus' words! Blessed the poor, those sons of humility, the peacemakers, and all the children of mercy; the mourners, the meek, the hungry for the right. Blessed that long line who wearily after Me shall tread the highway of martyrs; aye, blessed are ye all; and blessed the pure heart, for it shall see God. What a surprise it was! Did ye ever note, upon a summer landscape, the sudden coming of portentous clouds—silver-headed, then blue, then black, then streaked with gray; and all the flock and lowing herds go fleeing to their shelter, and man is tremulously expectant? Such was the darker cloud of earthly conquest Christ's auditors, before He spake, had conjured in that summer air. And did ye ever note that, just in the moment of such cloud's breaking, through a rift came the sun, and the storm was done without beginning? So came these peaceful words of Jesus: *Blessed, not the man of force, but the man of heart.*

There is a declaration of Scripture which you have often read, and have been startled at every reading: "*Every creature of God is good.*" Can that be? Yes, with the emphasis on "*God,*" not every creature or creation of man. What! is gold good? Yes. Yet what woes has it caused! Is the darkness good? Yes. Yet how men creep forth under its shielding for the employ of sin! Is the desire of knowledge good? Yes. Yet what bitter weeds of heresy have sprung from the student's patient planting! Is the mutual relation of sexes good? Yes. Yet what scarlet hands of man to woman and woman to man beckon downward into hell! And fear is good, and resentment, and self-love, and sorrow, laughter, and death—good by His law. Still, how often have we cut our fingers with them all! We stood, the day we left home to begin life for ourselves, amid all the "creatures" of God, as stands the druggist's clerk on the first morning of his apprenticing, not knowing which is sweet, or sour, or would kill, or would make alive; aye, and with a perverted impulse for the wrong use of all. Behold that tree which nods at the church window. Sometimes there is too much moisture in the air; sometimes too much heat; poisons are at its root, its leaf, its stock. Yet so "pure" is the tree, so does it follow just God's law, that it chooses and uses, not abuses, but fructifies by all. So amid all nature would be the really pure in heart; not that pure heart is all-wise, but it is so in harmony with God's law, so far as it is instructed, that it uses all things according to the Creator's intention. How? For beauty, purity, peace, and joy.

Apply this test. There are some persons who by birth seem possessed of a remarkable purity of soul; not the deepest, richest purity, such as it is the office of the Holy Spirit to bestow on every repenting mortal; rather this law-perceiving, law-abiding spirit. I have noted that every community, village, social circle has some person of whom it is often said, "I call him a pure-hearted man." There are those who remember him as a lad; and, while he verified the saying that "boys will be boys," there never was malice, nor meanness, nor falsehood in

his fun. As a young man, "Did you ever drink, sir?" "No; I never signed the pledge, nor had any especial religious convictions to hold me, but somehow I never cared to dissipate." A boy never sharply forbidden (nor needing it), yet never gloating over bad books; loving the fireside, and sister's and mother's society of the evening. A man never embroiled in law-suits nor envious quarrels with rival tradesmen; a man who has touched gold without avarice, amusements without folly, politics without theft, nor any blot upon his name. A pure nature from whom temptation seems, at least, to roll like rain-drops from a duck's white down. We will not cloak the fact because we cannot explain why such differences of birth should be. Rather let all the world say, "I envy the man who by nature is unsuspicious; by nature slow to wrath and easily forgives; by nature quick with pity's tears, and strong of will with appetite; swift to blush hot-faced at the approach of sin." And, in certain measures, such pure natures can be found. They be like great ships upon November seas, when winds are gruff and waters in rebellion; and while other men, like fishing-smacks and shallops, crank, unsteady, must watch each flaw and gust of wind lest suddenly they be caught and whelmed, *they* spread a bellying sail upon a moveless yard, and, heedless of cross-currents, drive onward to their home.

But none of these qualities of soul exist in any man by nature as they can be made to exist by grace, by the converting power of the Holy Spirit; for no man ever inherited such rare equipoise of soul, the gift of his birth, that the gift of the cross could not re-adjust and clarify. Besides, many of us are not blessed by nature with this transparency of soul, even in ordinary degree. With us, to be good is a hard fight, a constant warfare. And has God left us no hope of purity—us, the ill-born? Therefore we understand this book to say (Oh, exciting hope!) that, perhaps not without years of struggle, yet it *is* possible for the most discordant nature to become pure in the inmost heart, pure in the thoughts of the day, pure in the dreams of the night, *pure in the intended use of every creature God has given.*

Behold, then, how "blessed" such an one would be. *Pure Heart is blessed in the feeling of security.* If there is aught which can make life unblest, it is the fear of impending ill, and the uncertainty and insecurity of happiness resulting. Ask the herdsman who lives in the track of last year's avalanche; the great merchant, when Congress is tinkering the tariff; the white-face who has a little cough in the morning, and now and then a night-sweat! Insecurity is the foe of earthly joy. There are those men who feel morally insecure. There are those who sit, on Sabbath eve, with music of singing children, and the pure atmosphere of home—the thoughts of the sanctuary, and the healthful memory of its hymns—who say: "I dread Monday and New York!" Why? "Because I fear my weak self amid bad surroundings." There are men who dodge an old friend in the street. Why? "I've broken off my cups, and I fear to be 'offered a treat.'" Young men who take another road home, instead of the usual one. Why? "I have concluded to give up the theatre, and I dare not go by its glittering doors." Aye, and women who say: "I dislike to call on the A.'s, because I shall come home discontent with my own happy, but humbler-furnished home." You have met them—men who have a testy temper, and (wise fellows!) never talk politics because they fear themselves. Poor troubled souls, trying to be good, and walled in by good resolutions, yet fearing all the while a foe within their own walls, who may open the gates from within to the foe outside.

Not so the Pure Heart. He says, "I am not conscious of any desire within which shall go half-way to meet the allurements of sin; no little rivulets of half-indulgence which have eaten the sand from under my walls." Oh, how weak is guilt, how strong is purity! I have seen the hawk flap out of the top of tall hemlocks at my coming in the pasture. "Why, hawk, I'll not shoot you; it is but a walking stick I carry in my hand." "Ah! yes, but I think it may have a ball in it." And he sails high above the village steeple. "Nay hawk," says *the steeple*, "I'll not hurt. I'm but the finger pointing to your

Maker." "Ah! but *I* think you are a trap." He even parts company with the harmless sparrow, for the sparrow "may be a snare." Not so the dove. It lives in the cornice of men's dwellings, and nods good morning to the children in the chamber crib; it touches the foot of the housemaid as she shakes her cloth of crumbs; it rests up in the steeples of old churches, and the Sabbath bell, far from being a fright, is but the signal for the cooing chorus to begin.

The man of pure heart is blest with PEACEFUL SELF-RESPECT. He is not happy who cannot respect himself. It is God's law—as if there was a judge within us, whose constant care it is to pronounce upon our deeds, and fine us with remorse, or reward us with joy. And no man can respect himself who is living in *more or less constant communion with bad thoughts and evil pictures of imagination*. Suppose we grant that we are not altogether responsible for our thoughts, but, by the complications of daily life, before we know it we have planned a sin; or, by Satan's foes beleagured, we are thrust upon by pictures of iniquity. Still my proposition is true, that no such life could be a happy one. Could the master of a strong house be at peace, even if bolts and bars and granite strength kept all his foes at bay, if, ever and anon, the mob thrust the death's head at his windows? Aye, more, could he respect himself if, now and then, as impure hearts do, he showed a face for parley, or cautiously, yet surely, invited one of the red-shirted horde within, to see how he looked near by? The sunflower might say of wasps, and hornets, and bees: "Why do they pester me, and so hang about?" and the wasps would reply: "You entertain us, sir; you have what we love." And so the judge within man, true to his heaven-given instinct, makes reply to him pestered by bad thoughts: "There's something, sir, about you that these buzzards love!" And hence he parts with self-respect. There are those who, in thought, creep to the utmost verge of commercial honesty, and sketch upon paper the very figures of dishonest gains; then look, and think, and look again with hesitancy. Aye, tear it up, sir, and say, "*I'll be true.*" But *you have lost your self-*

respect; you are not the soul of honour. There are those who buy questionable illustrated papers at the ferry news-stand, and turn them over furtively, and blushing say, *when they have seen the last picture, "Why, I must not carry that home! Why did I buy it?"* Aye, throw it away, sir, throw it away; but *you have lost your self-respect; you are not the soul of chastity.* There are those who have been wronged by a neighbour, and conjure, in imagination, how that guilty one could be made to suffer. Imagination sees them suffer. Aye, turn from it, and say: "No; I am too noble to take revenge!" But *you have lost your self-respect; you are not the soul of forgiving love.* I saw by Lake Lemman the old castle of Chillon. Up above, the royal, tapestry-hung apartments of the Duke of Savoy and his gay bride; down below, the dungeon where Bonnivard was chained; where creeping things crawl forth to ogle at the visitors, and instruments of torture are; and I wondered if never, in some scene of revelry above, the groans of martyrs rose to stir the arras on gorgeous walls. There are those we meet in social life, the rooms of whose souls which are open to friends are fair as a palace. But alas! who shall tell us of the secret kept unseen? Not so pure heart. I do not pretend to say that ever on this earth we are freed from all solicitations of evil; but there is many a soul so "blessed" that, when winged thoughts of sin come flying to the windows, *God's angel rises up, and draws the shutters to;* when disturbing thoughts of hate, revenge, avarice, and pride draw near, God's angel meets them at the outer gate, and bids them all begone.

Pure Heart is "blest" in his RELATIONS WITH HIS FELLOW-MAN. You have observed, I have not taken this text to pieces exegetically. No, I have taken that popular meaning given in the ordinary speech of people by the phrase, "a pure-hearted man." I ought to say, by way of explanation, I do not believe all "pious" people have this grace, even though they may have received the grace of pardon, of faith, of adoption. Yet it can be for all. Pure Heart is blest because *he knows no envy of another's success, jealousy at another's praise.*

Dear, simple old heart. It never occurs to him that there is any less of summer's sun for him because a million others bask in its beams. Then, himself guiltless, he is never suspecting faults in others, nosing and snuffing around, a prurient prude, "Sure there's something wrong with A.;" that "B. needs watching;" but, as to the pure all things are pure, he gazes and luxuriates on the best side of everybody. O King Great Heart! thyself no man's enemy, thou thinkest no man thine, but dost beam upon the world like the October sunset upon the harvest fields. Sincere men respect him; upright men trust him; void of evil men love him. Do you not know some such man? I do,—in the village where I was reared. All his honours had not made him proud; all his sorrows had not killed his smile; all his conflicts had not made him doubt there was something good in every man—so clean that his pastor sat often at his feet to learn; so innocent that the prisoners in the county jail would confess their sins to him; so pure that women gathered in his shadow, and little children played with his white locks. And when he died, all the village folks drew nigh and said: "*perhaps* not perfect, but *mark the pure man.*"

"HE SHALL SEE GOD." That cannot be, for I recall Moses, hid in the cleft of the rock, since he could not see God's face and live. Yet it is written here: "He shall see God." No, no! It is a mockery of the Word; for I recall Jacob at Penue!, who went lame at God's touch, and got only a name, for the morning was breaking. And Isaiah and Manoah said: "We shall die, for we have seen Him face to face." Yet here it is in sacred promise. How? Thus. Mozart and his friend, the royal huntsman, went forth arm-and-arm to the fields. The wind came up heavily through the copse of trees. "Look!" says the hunter, "it will startle a hare!" "Listen!" says Mozart, "what a diapason from God's great organ!" A lark rose on soaring wing, with its own sweet song. "Look!" says the gamester, "what a shot!" "Ah!" says Mozart, "what would I give could I catch that thrill!" There be dull souls who

cannot see nor hear. Are they sick? "Oh! what misfortune." Are they bereaved? "Some enemy hath done this!" Are they well and prosperous? "Good luck!" Not so Pure Heart. He *can see God's hand in every sorrow chastening for good; God's face in every blessing; God's smile in the morning light, the blossoming harvest, and the evening shade. His heart is attuned.*

It has been done! What? You went from the church-yard to your closet; alone you bowed; you wept; you were crushed; you prayed; you closed your eyes; there came sweet peace, for you saw—Jesus.

THE ENDURING NAME;
OR,
MESSIAH'S ENDLESS RENOWN.

BY REV. ALEXANDER MILLER.

Preached at the Opening of the Synod of Long Island, at Southold.

"His name shall endure for ever : his name shall be continued as long as the sun : and men shall be blessed in him : all nations shall call him blessed."—PSALM lxxii. 17.

THIS glowing Psalm is, in the text of our English Bibles, entitled "A Psalm for Solomon;" in the margin—"of Solomon." The Hebrew preposition would bear either rendering. In the titles of many of the Psalms it is prefixed to the name of the undoubted author, and rendered "A Psalm of David," or "of Asaph," &c., as the case may be. In accordance with this usage, some eminent critics regard this Psalm as the production of Solomon. They seek to fortify this conclusion by urging the fact that the imagery of the Psalm is as evidently borrowed from the peaceful and brilliant reign of Solomon, as that of the second Psalm is from the martial and triumphant reign of David.

I confess to a greater sympathy with the older and commoner view, which ascribes its authorship—in substance, at least, if not in form—to David, and regards it as his dying prayer for Solomon,

his son and successor on the throne of Israel.* Before his death, David had the satisfaction of seeing Solomon sitting in his stead on the throne of the kingdom, and the princes and great men of the nation presenting their acknowledgments, and paying him their homage as king. (See 1 Kings i. 40, and 1 Chron. xxix. 23, 24.) The old man's heart was transported with joy at the sight, and uplifted to God in earnest prayer for blessings on the young king and his subjects. The spirit of prophecy was upon him, and a vision of the glory and splendor, the peace and prosperity, of Solomon's reign passed before him. But his prophetic eye penetrated farther than this. "Being (as Peter styles him, Acts ii. 33) a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn to him, with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne," he saw in the peaceful and prosperous reign of Solomon a type and promise of the more magnificent and glorious reign of Christ. Hence, in reading these glowing descriptions and predictions, we are compelled at every step to feel and to say, "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here." While these predictions had a partial and limited fulfilment in the wide extension and surpassing splendor of the kingdom under Solomon, they look far beyond it, even to the reign of God's Messiah, of whom Solomon was an eminent type. They portray the glories of *His* kingdom of righteousness and peace—a kingdom destined yet to fill the whole earth, and to endure for ever.

We regard Christ Himself, therefore, and His Spiritual Kingdom, as the main subject of the psalm. To Solomon, indeed, it had a primary reference, although in him it had only a partial fulfilment. Distinguished as he was for his wisdom and wealth, for the wide extent of his dominion, and the magnificence and

* Spurgeon's suggestion seems reasonable. It is, that "the spirit and matter of the psalm are David's; but that he was too near his end to pen the words or cast them into form; Solomon therefore caught his father's dying song, fashioned it into goodly verse, and, without robbing his father, made the psalm his own. It is, we conjecture, the prayer of David, but the psalm of Solomon."—*Treasury of David*. Vol. iii., p. 816.

prosperity of his reign, he has, nevertheless, no glory in these respects that can stand for a moment in comparison with the excelling glory of Christ. To Messiah alone are some of these predictions really applicable, and of Him alone, in the highest sense, are they true. "He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth" (v. 8). "All kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him" (v. 11). And particularly so, this lively oracle—the crown and climax of the whole—contained in our text, "His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed."

With his mind filled with the enrapturing theme, the Psalmist concludes his glowing description of the glory of Christ's kingdom and the happiness of His subjects, with an appropriate Doxology to God, in which he gives full expression to the over-flowing enthusiasm of his soul: "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen."

This Psalm has been fitly styled the "Missionary Psalm." It is one of the most jubilant in tone to be found in the entire collection. It contains one of the most distinguished Old Testament predictions of the spiritual nature, the universal diffusion, and the perpetual duration of Messiah's kingdom. The text refers to the king himself, and the estimation in which he shall be held by the millions of his loyal subjects. It predicts for him a name of undying fame, of imperishable lustre and renown—a renown that shall yet girdle the entire globe, filling every land, and inspiring every tongue. For "his name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed."

The theme, then, which the text presents for our contemplation is, *Messiah's glorious renown, a renown richly deserved, widely diffused, enthusiastically accorded, and everlastingly continued.*

The *perpetuity* of Jesus' name and fame is, however, the main idea of the passage. That name, we are here assured, shall be handed down with immortal honour to the latest generations of time, and adored for ever in the highest hallelujahs of eternity. Men have tried to erase that name, and blot it out from the earth; yet it *has* lived, *is* living, and its celebrity *extending* throughout the habitable globe. Despite all the malicious attempts of earth and hell to cloud the lustre and cut off the line of this honourable name, it shall be preserved and perpetuated for ever.

And I propose to show:—I. FOR WHAT REASONS; II. IN WHAT RESPECTS; and III. WITH WHAT RESULTS, Messiah's name and fame shall last for ever.

I. FOR WHAT REASONS.

And I remark, the name of Jesus shall endure for ever—

1st. Because by its own *inherent properties* it is *fitted* to endure. "His name alone is excellent,"—transcendently, infinitely excellent. There are two grand qualities which so distinguish Messiah's name above all others as to make it infallibly certain that his renown shall last for ever. These two elements are superlative greatness, and superlative goodness. Messiah's name is *fitted* to endure because a name (1) of *superlative greatness*, appealing to the wonder and veneration of men.

There are but comparatively few great names on earth. The vast majority of the race must be content to live and die in obscurity, their very names unknown beyond the little circle of their personal friends, or the community in which they live. And many names well known and often mentioned in particular localities, or even over continents, are not *great* names, but simply *notorious*. There are some, however, who through force of genius and favour of Providence have achieved for themselves a proud distinction above their fellows, carving their names high up the pinnacle of fame, and enjoying an almost world-wide renown. Many such names have been handed down to us in history—names of warriors, statesmen, and

philanthropists—whose fame has filled the world. But of how many, both of earth's dead and living heroes, is it true, that though their fame has travelled round the globe, it has, after all, only run in certain very narrow circles, the great masses of all the nations knowing little or nothing of it, and caring nothing for it. In many cases the *name* alone remains, while the *fame*, the very remembrance of that for which they were distinguished, has almost faded away. Many names great once are a mere floating vapour now. And many now on every tongue will, in a future generation, be almost entirely forgotten.

But the name Jesus stands out pre-eminent in greatness. It is the wonder of the universe. It is *the name above every name* at which every knee shall bow. It shines like a star. It glows like the sun. That sun that lit up the bowers of Paradise over man unfallen, and that robed itself in darkness when Jesus hung upon the cross; that sun which, with undimmed splendor and undiminished power, has rayed out its vivifying influences on a host of worlds from creation's morn till now—that is the chosen symbol of Messiah's undying fame and all-diffusive influence—for his name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun," &c.

The name of Jesus is the embodiment of all we know of God's majestic grandeur and matchless grace. He is "the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person." He is at once the greatest in nature and the grandest in achievement. Greatest in nature, for "His name is Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." Grandest in achievement, for "by him were all things created that are in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the Church. Which is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence" (Isa. ix 6, and Col. i. 16-18).

Amid all the glorious galaxy of earth's great names—aye,

high above them all—Messiah's name stands peerlessly pre-eminent. It is the diamond in the casket, sparkling with a lustre all its own, and shedding lustre on all the rest. Speak we of *rank*? God has made "his first-born higher than the kings of the earth;" yea, he is "Lord of angels," "having obtained a more excellent name than they." Speak we of *authority*? "All power is given to him, both in heaven and on earth." Speak we of *wisdom*? Christ is "the wisdom of God." Speak we of *love*? His heart is the warmest. Speak we of *power*? His arm is the strongest—the arm of Jehovah. Speak we of *personal excellence* and beauty of character? He is "fairer than the children of men," "the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." Speak we of the *dignity of his person*? He is "God over all, and blessed for ever." The superlative greatness of Jesus' name, appealing thus to the wonder and veneration of mankind, *fits* it to endure for ever.

But Messiah's name is *fitted* to endure, because it is a name—

2. Of *superlative goodness*. That name embodies a degree of active and disinterested benevolence, of service rendered and suffering endured for the benefit of others, utterly unexampled in the history of the race, and, therefore, appealing most powerfully to the sympathy, the generous love, and the heartfelt and lasting gratitude of mankind.

Not all the names that the world has heralded as *great*, have been *good*. The claims of many to remembrance have been founded on their crimes rather than upon their virtues. Theirs has been a greatness of *selfishness*, rather than the greatness of *self-sacrifice* for the service of others. Many of earth's great names have been a curse, and not a blessing; they deserve to rot, and be buried in everlasting oblivion. But there are names that shall be, and deserve to be, had in everlasting remembrance, whose renown is founded on their goodness; men who have earned the undying gratitude of peoples and nations, and proved themselves benefactors of their race.

But what are the benefits which the greatest of earth's heroes and philanthropists, or all of them together, have conferred

upon mankind, compared with those which have come from the anguished heart and bleeding hands of Jesus? What inestimable blessings he has conferred upon the race! We cannot reckon them up in order, for they are more than can be numbered; but, speaking generally, wherever the knowledge of his name has come, it has greatly ameliorated the condition of mankind. The preaching of Christ's gospel, and the onward march of his kingdom, have given stability to law, and security to life; have procured, preserved, and perpetuated liberty, and promoted peace, progress, and prosperity. Science, literature, and art, and all the industries and activities of civilized society, have invariably followed in the wake of Christ's gospel. In these respects, as in many others, "Behold, the world has gone after him." And when we consider what Christ has done to procure and preserve these earthly rights, immunities, and blessings, even ungodly men have no other name they should so gratefully cherish and remember.

But these benefits, precious as they are, are as nothing compared with the blessings of redemption. God has conferred many blessings upon men, but the best of them all is the gift of His Son—"His unspeakable gift." It was mainly in respect of spiritual blessings that it was anciently promised that in Christ all kindreds of the earth should be blessed. It is as *Redeemer* of our souls that Jesus proves himself the noblest benefactor of the race. It is his *saving name* that shall yet fill the world with the perfume of its everlasting renown. The spiritual redemption of the soul is its grandest achievement. There is nothing like it in the universe of God. The plan of salvation is God's master-piece; and Jesus wrought it out in tears and groans and blood. See him espouse our hopeless cause, and come from heaven for our relief. Follow his earthly career, from Bethlehem's cradle to Calvary's cross, and see how well he earned the name, the "friend of sinners." See him enduring the contradiction of sinners, giving his back to the smiters, and hiding not his face from shame and spitting; suffering the agony of the garden, and the shameful and accursed death

of the cross, "bearing our sins in his own body on the tree," and say—

"O Lamb of God, was ever pain,
Was ever love, like thine?"

And when we contemplate the untold wealth of blessings secured to us by the deep sorrows of his soul—deliverance from the curse of the law, from the bondage of sin, from the fear of death and the pains of hell; adoption into the family of God; the indwelling and operations of the Spirit; all needed grace on earth, and a heritage of glory unfading in heaven—shall not our hearts cry out,

"Worthy the Lamb, who once was slain,
To take the throne, and live, and reign?"

All hail! Thou great Deliverer of our race! All hail! to Him who soothes our sorrows, dries up our tears, redeems our souls, removes our sins. All hail! thou Vanquisher of Satan, Abolisher of death, Conqueror of the grave, Giver of eternal life, Hope of a groaning, suffering world, noblest Benefactor of mankind. Thou hast a name that is above every name, and that name shall endure for ever.

While some names are remembered for one thing, and some for another, Messiah's name is the embodiment of every excellence. He stands unapproachable and alone, without a compeer or rival; renowned for wisdom, renowned for power, renowned for purity, renowned for his majestic greatness; but, most of all, renowned for his matchless goodness, his pitying, bleeding, saving love to sinners of mankind.

Brethren, can you conceive of anything more proper or becoming, than that a name of such *superlative greatness* and *surpassing goodness* should command the homage of an admiring and adoring world? Surely such a name is *well fitted* to endure for ever.

But not only shall the name of Jesus endure for ever because by its own *inherent properties* it is *fitted* to endure, but also—

2. Because, by God's *immutable purposes and promises*, it is *destined* to endure for ever.

Posthumous fame is sought and desired by all, and we do not understand the Scriptures to forbid it. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." Christ himself commended Mary's costly expression of her love for him when she anointed him with the precious ointment, saying, "Whosoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."

Earth's greatest heroes die, and the perpetuation of their name and fame depends on influences beyond their control. But Jesus, who by dying for us secured for himself undying fame, now lives for ever to administer a rule that shall keep alive the memory of that wondrous death, and make it a spring of perpetual blessing to mankind. And Jesus desires to be remembered. And what Jesus desires, Jehovah has decreed—that "his name shall endure for ever." It is connected with the very existence of the Church. It is bound up with the prospects of man. While the wicked, both by fraud and by force, have tried to blot it out from the earth; and while even God's people at times are chargeable with a criminal forgetfulness, Jehovah is concerned for his continuance. And so He has decreed and to Jesus declared, "I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations, therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever" (Psa. xlv. 17). That promise the Omnipotence of God is engaged to make good; and against that, no power or policy of earth or hell can prevail.

When the prediction of the text was uttered, there was little, apparently, in the existing state of things to justify the expectation that it would ever be realized. While Jesus was on earth appearances were against it, for "he was despised and rejected of men." When he died upon the cross, and was laid in the tomb, that name was blackened with infamy, and seemingly consigned to oblivion. But his resurrection rallied the hopes of his fainting disciples, and the Spirit of Pentecost made their preaching of that name a power to the conversion of thousands. And as time has rolled on, its triumphs have extended. It has come down to us in all the freshness of its youth, and the

fulness of its power, to charm and conquer the heart. It is a name loved, revered, and adored by millions to-day. But glorious as is its history, still more glorious is its promised destiny. For "his name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed."

II. IN WHAT RESPECT shall Messiah's name endure for ever?

Two forms of expression are employed by the Psalmist to set forth the perpetuity of Messiah's renown: the one relative, the other absolute; the one covering that portion of the gospel dispensation which has yet to run, the other expressive of absolute eternity. And that name, we are told, shall *propagate* itself during the continuance of the one—it shall be *perpetuated* throughout the ceaseless ages of the other. Keeping in view this fact, then, that Messiah's name is represented as to be both *propagated through time*, and then *perpetuated for ever*, I mention three respects in which that name is destined to endure, viz., as (1) *emblazoned on the pages of a living book*; (2) *embodied in lasting institutions*; (3) *embalmed in the memory and enshrined in the affections of loving hearts*. In a *living book*, in *lasting institutions*, and in *loving hearts* the name and fame of Jesus shall endure for ever.

1st. Emblazoned on the pages of a *living Book*. Christ is an author. The Bible is his book. It is an autobiography. He is both its author and its substance. His glorious name is emblazoned on every page. It breathes like a sweet perfume throughout the whole. "To him gave all the prophets witness." "Search the Scriptures," said the Master, for "they testify of me."

Many books are very short-lived—shelved almost as soon as published, and their author's name forgotten. Some books yet live, however, to perpetuate for their authors the fame they long ago procured. Yet, after all, how few books there are that have stood the test even of a few centuries of time. But this Bible is *immortal*. It contains imperishable elements, truths of universal application and of undying interest to man-

kind. Bearing one of Christ's own distinctive titles, it is "the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." The oldest of all books, it is, nevertheless, the best, the newest, the freshest, and the most forceful of all books to-day, for "Christ liveth in it." Despite all the attempts of infidelity to discredit it, or of Antichrist to oppose and suppress it, that book shall live. As it suits all classes, and adapts itself to all cases, so also it shall yet be carried to all climes, translated into all human tongues, and found ultimately in all homes and hands. The demand for it, and the perusal of it, and the benign and blessed influences exerted by it, shall never cease. As in Pentecostal days, so also in coming generations, the word of the Lord shall mightily grow and prevail. It is the rod of God's strength, the sword of God's spirit, the manifestation of God's character, the revelation of God's Christ—his finished portrait, and the record of his grand achievements. This Bible is immortal. It cannot die while the race of man shall live. And in and through this living book, the name and fame of Jesus shall endure for ever.

2nd. Embodied in *lasting institutions*. Many men have proved themselves public benefactors, and made for themselves an honourable name, by founding schools, colleges, asylums, or other institutions, which live and flourish to hand down their names to coming generations. Christ also is the founder of lasting institutions, that will perpetuate his name and fame for ever. Beyond compare, the noblest institution in the world to-day is the Christian Church, and of that, Jesus is the founder. And it shall last when all merely human institutions have passed away. Arts of hellish policy, and arms of persecuting power, have combined to corrupt and crush her; but though at times, and in particular localities, apparently brought low, she never has been, and never will be, overthrown. Founded upon the Rock of Ages, she shall never be moved. "Upon this rock will I build my Church," says the Saviour, "and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The secret of her continuance, and the security of her triumph, is in the fact that Christ, her Head, her Founder, and her King, is enthroned within her.

"God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; the Lord shall help her, and that right early." He has promised to make her "an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations." She shall live and spread, and fill the whole earth. Her mission is to magnify the saving name of Jesus; and in and through this living Church, the name and fame of Jesus shall endure for ever.

But not only is the Church itself Christ's monument—the embodiment of his grand ideas and purposes of saving mercy to mankind—but within the Church he has founded other institutions which will also last for ever, to perpetuate his fame. In the *Lord's Supper* we have a monument of his atoning sacrifice that shall continue to "show his death till he come"—keeping his blessed person and his bleeding love in perpetual remembrance. In the *Lord's Day* we have a monument of our Divine Redeemer's resurrection from the dead and triumph o'er the grave; and these sweet Sabbaths of earth shall not cease to proclaim the risen Saviour until merged in the dawn of the eternal Sabbath of heaven. We have also Divine ordinances of *prayer* and *praise*, of *preaching* and *giving*, that shall not cease, while the world stands, to exalt Christ's name and spread abroad his fame, through the earth. For "he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba; prayer also shall be made for him continually, and daily shall he be praised."

In these lasting institutions, then—in the Church itself, in her continued existence and growing prosperity, in her sweet Sabbaths, her solemn sacraments, her sacred services, her sublime self-sacrifices, and her sweet inspiring songs—the name and fame of Jesus shall be wafted to the heavens, floated o'er the earth, carried down the ages, and perpetuated for ever.

3rd. *Enshrined in loving hearts.* That name is for ever embalmed in the memory and enshrined in the affection of every loyal disciple. Christ is the honoured father of a happy family, a princely race of regenerated souls that shall never die out, but shall continue to multiply and increase till they shall overspread the whole earth. The names of other fathers and families may

become extinct in course of time, but Messiah's name, it is here declared, "shall be *son-ned* (that is, perpetuated in his posterity) as long as the sun shines." To Jesus it has been promised, as the reward of his soul's travail, "He shall see his seed" in successive generations of ransomed souls born of his Spirit, reflecting his likeness, and bearing his name—Christians after Christ. This family all hold their Head in highest esteem. And he is "glorified in them." His name and fame shall live in their *holiness, love, and gratitude* for ever.

In their *holiness*. For whence and what is Christian holiness, but just Christ living in us, and reproducing in us the features of his own beautiful character? He is the giver of the sanctifying Spirit, and the source of all purifying and elevating influences. And they honour him by striving to imitate him. They all desire to be Christ-like, and in every one of them there is more or less of the image of Christ, something that speaks of Christ, and makes him known to others.

In their *love and affection*. For his attractive grace has won their hearts. His name is to them "as ointment poured forth." The very mention of it touches a chord that vibrates to the deepest recesses of the soul. On the throne of their hearts Jesus is exalted, and there he will for ever abide, loved, admired, and adored.

In their cherished *gratitude*, also, his name shall for ever endure. Think of the magnitude and extent of his claims upon their grateful remembrance. To him they owe everything. Whose name shall be held in memory dear, if his shall be forgotten? Will the blind forget who opened their eyes? Will the captives forget who broke their chains? Shall ransomed sinners ever cease to remember their Saviour? No, never. Never will the name of Jesus be forgotten while there is a single saved sinner on earth to sing of his mighty love. If you could blot that name out of the Bible, if you could erase it from every monumental pillar in the universe, you never could blot it out, either from the grateful remembrances of ransomed sinners on earth, or from the *rapturous songs* of glorified spirits in heaven.

In the exalted admiration, the quenchless affection, the undying gratitude and devotion of his people, Christ has reared for himself a monument more beautiful than marble, and more durable than the granite. Embalmed in the grateful memory and enshrined in the loving affection of all loyal disciples, the name and fame of Jesus shall endure for ever.

III. WITH WHAT RESULTS shall Messiah's renown endure for ever? I mention two:—Benefactions from him, and benedictions upon him.

1st. *Benefactions from him.* Messiah's reign shall be a perpetual source of richest benefactions to the race, for "men shall be blessed in him." Aye, so large, ample, and free shall these benefactions be, that they shall consciously revel in the possession and enjoyment of them. "Men shall *bless themselves* in him"—partaking without stint or restraint, receiving his benefits with open hand and thankful heart. Some of these benefactions are beautifully depicted in the course of the Psalm, and fitly expressed in the words of the hymn:

"Blessings abound where'er he reigns;
The joyful prisoner bursts his chains,
The weary finds eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blest.
Where he displays his healing power,
Death and the curse are known no more;
In him the tribes of Adam boast
More blessings than their father lost."

2nd. *Benedictions upon him.* Messiah's grateful subjects shall ceaselessly heap their benedictions upon him who has so lavishly poured down his benefactions upon them. "All nations shall call him blessed." Subjects should speak well of their sovereign. The centre of attraction, the source of benefaction, the object of universal love and admiration, Messiah's happy subjects shall for ever admire his excellencies and celebrate his victories, encircling his brow with their garlands of praise.

"For him shall endless prayer be made,
And endless praises crown his head;
His name, like sweet perfume, shall rise
With every morning sacrifice."

People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on his love with sweetest song ;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on his name.

Let every creature rise and bring
Peculiar honours to our King ;
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud Amen."

Sinner, trust in that name. "O, trust that mighty name, and live!" It is the only name under heaven, given among men, whereby you can be saved. It is *amazingly simple*. His name is *Jesus*, just because "he shall save his people from their sins." It is *amply sufficient*. Trust him, and you shall find him "mighty to save."

Christian, triumph in that glorious name. Lift it up with joyous exultation. Let your soul magnify the Lord; let your spirit rejoice in God your Saviour. Let him be your glory and your boast all the day long. Speak well of his name. Saints should speak well of their Saviour. Do not slander it, do not disgrace it—"that worthy name by which ye are called." See that ye honour it both by lip and by life. Speak of his glory. Spread abroad his fame. Christ's renown upon earth, aye, even in Christendom, is not yet what it *ought* to be, not yet what it *will* be. Then "declare his doings; make mention that his name is exalted." Lift it up in the pulpit; celebrate it in song; let it float from the harp-string; let it peal forth from the organ; let it be wafted on the wings of the wind, from continent to continent, and from shore to shore, till it shall girdle the globe. Let it pour in floods of sweet melody from the hearts of the ransomed on earth, and from the harps of the glorified in heaven. Let it be hallowed in the Church, hosannahed round the world, and hallelujahed in the heaven of heavens for ever and ever. "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things: and blessed be his glorious name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen!"

THE SPIRITUALITY OF GOD.

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"God is a spirit."—JOHN iv. 24.

WE learn from the necessity of assigning one first great cause in order to account for the origin, nature, and power of the universe, of man, and of the Bible, that there is a God. There is a supreme, personal Being, upon whom we are dependent for existence and preservation, to whom we are responsible for our character and conduct; who made, endowed, preserves, controls, employs all around us; who spake by the prophets, recorded by the evangelists, and empowers by his energy the words of truth; who guides all events, shapes all history; who is in the church, and subserves all the voluntary and involuntary powers and resources of the world to its progress and ultimate universal triumph. As soon as the fact of God's existence is settled in our minds, we instinctively seek to know something of his nature. Who is he? What is he? The religious nature in man which compels him to feel after God, if haply he may find him, is not satisfied, but stimulated to new inquiry by the discovery of His being. Now that it knows there is a God, it must know "*what is God.*" As the fact of God's existence is needful to furnish the possibility of a religion, so the knowledge of His character and relations to men must give the form of religion. Religion, as a science, is the systematized knowledge of God. Religion, as an experience, is the appreciation and employment of the knowledge. Experimental religion is the effect of the truth concerning God upon the *heart, and will, and life.* The nature of the experience, there-

fore, will be determined by the character of the facts perceived and apprehended. According as God is viewed in the mind, He will be loved, honoured, worshipped in the heart; obeyed, served, glorified in the life. When God is misunderstood, religion is false—false in fact, false in experience. When God is rightly apprehended, religion is pure and undefiled.

My brethren, we ask to-day the most important question human lips have ever put to the oracles of God. What is God? It brings us into the presence of the sublimest and most awful things in the range of human thought. We take the key that opens the mysteries of the infinite and eternal. We stand, with the prophet, with expectant eyes upturned to the throne of the highest, praying the prayer of Moses, the man of God, "Show me thy glory." If we reverently listen, we shall hear the inspiring answer, "I will make all my goodness to pass before thee," and we shall know God. If we know Him we shall love Him as we ought, and serve Him with acceptance. We shall be saved. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." And may the spirit of truth open our eyes and enable us to perceive the invisible things of Him in His works and word, and by His sanctifying grace number us among "the pure in heart" who shall "*see God.*"

In endeavouring to know God, who is infinite, we shall be able to obtain only a partial view. When we have compassed all revealed truth, in nature and in the word, we shall still exclaim, "Lo, these are but parts of His ways." What we do discover concerning Him is nevertheless certain and reliable. We may also know enough to elevate us to the highest degree of intellectual and moral excellence of which we are capable here; we shall know enough to satisfy us to all eternity, when we pass into the school of the hereafter. Let us, then, reverently bear in mind the limits of our powers, and not attempt to pry too closely, or push our inquiries too far. For now we know in part; we see in a mirror darkly reflected the faint image of the glorious reality. *By-and-bye we shall know more, we shall see face*

to face, know even as we are known. Until then, let us be content with what is revealed.

From what has been said, it is impossible to define God in the strict sense of the term definition. To define is to mark or indicate limits which describe within their extent the object defined. To define Palestine is to declare its limits. To define truth is to draw the distinctive line of thought which divides the real from the unreal. God cannot be defined, for He is infinite. We can put no limits to His nature and attributes; we cannot go out after them into infinity with our finite minds; but we can define what God is, in the sense of stating to what class of beings He belongs, and how He differs from all others of that class. For example of this sort of definition observe this: "Man is a rational animal." Here the class of animal existences is stated, and the difference between man and other animals—his possession of a rational soul.

By this method of definition, the question, "What is God?" is answered in the Catechism, "God is a spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth."

At present your attention is called to the consideration of God's SPIRITUAL NATURE; *i. e.*, GOD IS A SPIRIT.

As far as our knowledge extends, we know of the existence of only two substances: the one, with qualities that are known to us by our senses, we call matter; the other, known only to us by consciousness, is spirit. We are as sure of the essential difference between matter and spirit as we are of our own existence. You pick up a stone; it has weight, hardness, cohesion. You call it matter. You cast it down beside a tree. The tree is also matter. It has weight, hardness, cohesion, taste, odour. And yet it differs from the stone. It grows. This the stone cannot do. The stone may be increased by accretion from without; the tree increases by its own energy, by development from within. It selects, appropriates, assimilates, organises into form the matter that lies in the soil or floats in the air. We say here *is a new principle*, and we call it life—vegetable life. But

while we examine it an animal leaps out from the undergrowth. He sees us, fears us, turns aside, and flees from our presence. The animal is matter also. His flesh, sinews, bones, have the qualities that belong in common to the stone and tree. But there is a difference in the form of action exhibited by the tree and animal. He recognizes our presence, is able to move from it, is actuated by fear, and chooses the direction and measure of his activity as he flees in the opposite course to escape us. Here is life manifesting itself by intelligent, voluntary activity, and we call the newly discovered principle the life of instinct—the *spirit* of the animal. We compare ourselves with the animal, and perceive the same intelligent, voluntary action in ourselves. It is directed, however, by intelligent judgment, not incited by mere instinct, but resting upon reasons apprehended, and moral motives in operation, and we call the new principle a rational spirit—a soul. This principle in man is not composed of matter, it is not the result of the combination of matter into nerves and brain, it is a separate substance that forms and acts through the material body. This fact is as well settled as any fact of human knowledge.

Now why is the word spirit employed to denote the vital, intelligent, voluntary principle? The word literally signifies wind or breath. As spirit is devoid of all the qualities of matter, the wind, which manifests fewest of the qualities, is used to represent it. Hence the immaterial soul is called the wind—the spirit.

And now what is this spirit of man? The only wise answer is, we do not know. We do not know matter except as a something that is always and everywhere possessed of certain qualities, such as extension, weight, cohesion. It can be seen, touched, modified, separated into particles. You may decompose it, and give the separated parts new names; you may divide it again and again, until you can go no further in your chemistry; it is still a thing unknown, except that it retains certain qualities, and is called matter. So is it with spirit. It is a certain something that has none of the qualities of matter, but has

qualities peculiar to itself, and therefore claims a separate character and name from matter.

Now God is a spirit, inasmuch as he possesses none of the qualities of matter, and is a living, sensitive, conscious, intelligent, voluntary being. The Pantheists teach that God is material—he is the world; that when the matter out of which he is composed is formed into the organization we call man, then it educes life, and intelligence, and consciousness. God did not therefore exist as a conscious, intelligent, voluntary being until man grew out of him. Mr. Emerson thinks that God came to perfection in Daniel Webster, Theodore Parker, and probably in Mr. Emerson too. It is singular how common sense diminishes when speculation goes beyond its limits. What more horrible than this materializing of God and deifying of man! It is inspired of the pride that hurled Satan from heaven, and made in the fair universe of God a hell. It is the very spirit that seduced Adam, in the woeful temptation, “Ye shall be as God.” Of necessity this doctrine destroys all religion. God is material—a thing. This thing cannot be worshipped, loved, trusted, served, glorified. When it becomes conscious in man he is a God, and may worship, love, serve himself. Be warned, my hearer, how you tamper with the speculations of these scientific dreamers, for greater minds than yours, by yielding themselves to the seductions of a false philosophy, have been “given over to believe a lie.”

Our confession of faith adds to its definition of God, a word not found in the definition in the catechism. It reads, “God is a *pure* spirit.” It adds a phrase explanatory of this word: “A most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions.”

The spirit of man abides in a body. It is dependent upon a body; it cannot receive or impart ideas except by means of the bodily senses, at least in its natural state. Under supernatural influence, as in divine illumination and inspiration, the spirit may receive knowledge from within, but this is not its natural method of receiving thought. It is inseparably connected with the body, and is dependent upon it for its emotions,

exercises, thoughts. God is entirely spiritual. He is confined to no material organization—has no part, no material sense or passions. He is a most pure spirit.

Several important and interesting facts follow from this truth.

1. God is invisible. We can see only that which has form. Spirit not material in its substance cannot have that modification of matter which, by the laws of light, is presented to us, and which we call form. Sight is given to us only to take cognizance of that which has form. It is, therefore, no imperfection of our vision that we cannot see a spirit. Those who are superstitious may dismiss their fears, for they never have seen, they never will see, a ghost. A spirit can only be known by its operations through a material body. This is all we know of each other. You never have seen your most intimate friend. You have seen his body, you have not seen him—the spirit that loves and cherishes you. When he dies, does not your heart tell you he is gone? Yet here is his body. It is not he. You see all you have ever seen, but you do not see him. So you never have seen God. You cannot see him. He manifests himself not to your senses, but to your experience. You walk by faith, and not by sight; as seeing, but not seeing, him who is *invisible*, “who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom *no man hath seen or can see*.”

2. But does not God surround himself with a form, not indeed a part of him, not indeed dependent upon it for his activity exercised upon other objects, but to indicate his presence, as the body of a man indicates his presence. We answer, God assumes no invariable form as the token of his presence, the form in which he *abides*. A form has limits, or it cannot be a form. A body infinite could not be seen, for it would have no boundaries to give it shape. A form must be limited in space. God cannot assume a material form, for it would confine him in a portion of the universe. This could not be, for he is everywhere present, beholding the evil and the good. “God is a spirit, infinite in his being.” Who ever imagined the form of

God? The most rapt prophet has only seen light unapproachable as a symbol of his presence. Only light the most diffusive, pervading, unbounded, visible thing can represent his local presence. "Who clothes himself with light as with a garment." To whom, then, will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto him? "Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not." "O that I knew where I might find him; that I might come even to his seat. Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand that I cannot see him. But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me I shall come forth as gold."

3. God has occasionally assumed forms by which he has manifested himself specially to some of his people.

Some of the elements have been employed by God, on account of their fitness to image some of the attributes of his nature, to indicate his especial presence. The peculiar form of manifestation was determined by the nature of the transaction which called for its exhibition. It is written in the sacred history of Israel that "the Lord appeared in the tabernacle in the pillar of a cloud." This symbol represented his presence in the tabernacle, associating with it his mysteriousness and incomprehensibility, as elsewhere, in a figure, clouds and darkness are said to surround his throne. To Moses he appeared in the burning bush, making fire a symbol of his presence. There was no form in the fire, but a voice came out of the bush, saying, "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God. In the journeying of the children of Israel, the presence of God was indicated by the cloud and fire alternately: a cloudy pillar led them by day, and assured them of their deliverer's nearness at night by illuminating its face toward the host, while *it was still dark* and obscure toward the enemy of the people

behind. Veiled by the cloud by day, beaming through it at night, Jehovah led and guarded the church in the wilderness.

On Sinai the elements were mustered to declare and defend the awful presence of the Ruler and Judge of all the earth. Power, vengeance, wrath, separation, alienation were symbolized there. "There were thunders and lightning, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly."

In the vision of Isaiah a more definite form is seen. "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." A king, a human form, clad in a royal robe the skirts of which, radiant and resplendent, swept the temple. Above this form stood the seraphim, covering with their wings their faces and their feet, crying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that spoke, and the scene was veiled again, for the house was filled with smoke."

In Daniel's history we have the wonderful story of the three captives. Nebuchadnezzar had ordered them to be cast into the seven times intensified fiery furnace. The order was obeyed in presence of the tyrant, when suddenly he exclaimed, "Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?" They answered and said unto the king, "True, O king." He answered and said, "Lo! I see four men walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God." God in the form of man was in the furnace with His servants. This, prophetic of the incarnation, was the most frequent mode of divine manifestation. It was a man in outward form and feature that communed with Abraham. A man, one of the three, sent to Abraham to warn him of the impending ruin of Sodom, represented the Angel of the Covenant, Jehovah of Israel, and after the covenant mission, disappeared and left the two to visit the guilty plain, messengers of wrath. A man wrestled with Jacob until the break of day,

and touched him upon his thigh, and sent him halting over the brook, a prince that had power with God and prevailed.

Nor was the dignity of God humiliated by this favourite form of manifestation beyond the humiliation of stooping to man at all. His wisdom judged it needful to manifest himself to the sensual apprehension of man. Among all the possible forms of personal existence, what could have been chosen more fitting than the human form? If some form had been *invented*, it would have been startling, overpowering, or fearful to man. Nothing higher in organization than man could have made familiar communication to him. Nothing lower than his form would have been appropriate to a God in his estimation, and could not, therefore, have commanded his respect. And what could have been so intelligible to man as man? What could so speak to him as his own face and gesture and voice? Looking forward to the great mystery of our religion—the humanity of the Son of God—what appropriateness and power of meaning was there in the human form of the Angel of the Covenant! How is the unity of the old Covenant and the new most beautifully asserted by the forms walking in the midst of the visions of ancient time, and substantial and real in the temple and city, on Olivet, Horeb, and Calvary, the form like unto the Son of God!

Finally, the presence of God is revealed in a personal manifestation in the humanity of Jesus Christ. “No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” The co-equal, co-eternal Son of God has manifested the Godhead to men. He has performed the office of revealer in all that God hath done to make himself known. In creation, providence, redemption, he is the active agent in displaying the divine attributes. He, dwelling from all eternity in the bosom of God, shared his knowledge, participated in his plans, and in time carried into execution all God’s great purposes. Thus is he the revealer. All the personal manifestations of God were made by him. He *dwelt in the bush*; he led Israel in the desert; he was the *Angel of the Covenant*. But in the incarnation he became the

image of the invisible God. In him, as God-man, is displayed the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person. Great is the mystery of godliness, "God manifest in the flesh."

The Son of God took of the substance of Mary a true body. In the divine apparitions, the body was unsubstantial, unreal; when it was material, it was summoned into being for the time, and then instantly dissipated when the manifestations ceased. The body of Jesus is real, assumed for all eternity. As it was glorified on the mountain of the transfiguration, so is it now glorified; yet it is the same human body still. A human hand sways the sceptre of universal dominion. Angels bow before the Son of Man. Stephen, in his vision, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." Paul, on his way to Damascus, saw the heavens opened, and heard a voice saying, "I am Jesus, the Nazarene, whom thou persecutest." And Paul testified that he had seen the risen Messiah, David's son. Conspicuous for ever among the glorious beings of the heavenly world, sits enthroned the "Word made flesh."

But will there be no other way in which we shall see the Father? Not unless there be a new sense by which a spirit may be seen. We need not see a spirit in order to be satisfied with his presence. Such a presence is not an object of sight, but of blessed companionship, of spiritual communication and sympathy. It is not revealed that we shall see God in any form save as we see him in the face of Jesus Christ. "Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou, then, show us the Father?"

But is a human form a fit embodiment of God in the celestial glory and majesty of his presence? Yes; glorified with Immanuel's *transfiguration glory*, it may present Him to our view in *grandeur inexpressible*. Let your imagination rise to

the conception of a perfect human form, complete in every part, moulded in exquisite proportion and harmony, clothed with every grace, and purified from every taint and blemish of corruption. Dream the sculptor's dream, and colour it with the splendors of the painter's vision. How noble and peerless a thing is the human form! Then inspire it with divinity. Let the mind of God speak its deep expressiveness, and lift its lofty thoughts through the flashing eye; let divine excellence shine pure on its lofty brow, and God's mighty heart thrill through every motion, and send the current of its infinitely fervid sensibilities to blush upon its cheek and wreath about its matchless lips, and tremble on its heaven-attuned voice, and well may rapt angels fling their jewelled crowns at the feet, and strike their quivering harps to the praise, of Him who is the fullness of the Godhead embodied. Oh, yes. Draw nearer, ye ransomed; see in those now transparent palms where once the nails were driven. Look! in those alabaster feet are the seamed scars that mark the piercing of the nails; and in that side, just underneath the heart of love that beat for your salvation and broke that you might live—see, see! where the cruel spear was thrust. Ah! yes. Well may the God of our redemption wear for ever the form that trod Gethsemane and hung on Calvary, while all heaven sings in one eternal chorus, Worthy art thou, for thou hast redeemed us by thy blood, to receive glory and honour and power and wisdom and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Christian brethren, let us learn the lesson Jesus taught at Jacob's well. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. He has no sensual eyes to behold the splendid ritual, He has no ears to hear high sounding music; He has not sense to discern the costly incense, the precious oblation. His heart of love wants the returning throb of spiritual affection. "My son, give me thine heart." Come, then, to his mercy-seat with repentance, love, obedience; come, though sinful: come, though polluted! "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, *thou wilt not despise.*"

THE STONE AT THE DOOR.

A Resurrection Sermon.

BY REV. DR. DEEMS.

"And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great."—MARK XVI. 3, 4.

THERE never was such a Sabbath on earth as that described in this context.

To Jesus, our Divine Master, it was a Sabbath of silence. His ministry had closed. His public career had ended. He was in the sepulchre. No taunts of enemies, no curses of murderers, no pleading sick man's voice in his ears, no Martha's complaint, no Mary's regretful chiding for his absence, no blind man begging for sight, no shouts of "Hosanna!" no cry of "Crucify him!" Love and hate and want and weakness were all outside, and Jesus was in the sepulchre. No longer from mount or lake side came the tones of his voice preaching the kingdom of God.

To the disciples it was a Sabbath of grief. Many another Sabbath had come upon them, and found them with burdened hearts. They had had the common cares of humanity and the pinchings of poverty. Sometimes their nets broke. Sometimes their mothers were sick. Sometimes they could not catch fish nor buy corn. Sometimes the depression of Israel had given them despondency. Sometimes the Roman yoke had galled them.

Sometimes their own heart sins had given them heart sorrows. They had been sons, lovers, husbands, labourers, patriots, sinners, men. They knew graves. They had buried loves. But never such a Sabbath as this had they seen. It was not a Sabbath. It was not a rest. The heart had been torn out of their lives. The sack of Jerusalem, the burning of the Temple, the destruction of all their homes, had been nothing to this. More than father or mother, or fields, or houses, or boats, or even their holy fatherland, they had loved Jesus. He had been to them strength, wisdom, light, and life itself. All the population of the world to them had been divided into two parts, Jesus constituting one part, and all other persons the other part. And he had been the larger part. They could not have been so lonely if all other people had died, provided Jesus had lived. His death had left their life worse than any death. So has it always been with every true lover of Jesus. This was the darkest Sabbath the disciples had ever seen.

To the churchmen in their temple-worship it was a Sabbath of guilt and fear. Many a Sabbath before they had meditated the murder of the great teacher, and gnashed their teeth in malice amid their hallelujahs, but never before had Sabbath sun seen their hands actually stained with his blood. Punctilious observers of the Levitical ritual, they had been forgetters of the Levitical morality. But the scenes of the crucifixion must have given them spasms of guilt. Sing they might; but there lay that dead saint in the garden, and they seemed to hear his deep pantings as he travelled under the cross towards Golgotha. Pray they might; but they would seem to hear Jehovah telling them to wash their hands in innocency, and so surround his altars.

Then, there was something about that garden-sepulchre that was frightful to them. They had rolled up a huge stone and sealed it, set a guard, and yet that teacher seemed to be abroad and walking through the Temple, and ever and anon his great eyes would throw out flashes from their awful depths, which made their souls quail in them. And ever and anon their hearts

beat as they seemed to hear the accents of his marvellous voice, as if its echoes still hung on cloister-beams, and would occasionally descend with its palpitating utterances on their horror-stricken ears. No living man could scare them as that dead man did.

There were women in the transaction. One was the dearest friend Jesus had on earth, the Mary of Magdala. She had two friends who also loved Jesus, another Mary, and a Salome. Greater to woman is any blow than to man. She loves better and hates better than man. Think of those three women sitting through all the Sabbath under the darkness of that grief, that grief which fell on their souls like frost on flowers. There was nothing left for Mary of Magdala—absolutely nothing. Her earth and heaven lay in the new sepulchre in Joseph's garden. She breathed, but she hardly lived. I think that if Jesus had not soon risen she would have died. He had done more for her than any other, and ever since her cure she gave every breath and thought and love to him. And he was dead. The world was dead to her.

Men call women weak because women are stronger than men. Contrast the behaviour of these two women with those men disciples: with John, who had been ready to call down fire from heaven to burn a Samaritan village because it was inhospitable to Jesus: with Peter, the slashing and burly disciple that swore he would stick by his Master, and then swore he did not know him. What were those eleven men doing? Nothing: they were just like other men when first bankrupt. But the godly women kept the Sabbath in silent reverence and sorrow. They did not go to the disciples for comfort. They did not go back to the sepulchre. They kept the Sabbath, and they kept the spices they had procured. And then, when the Sabbath was passed, as early as there was any hope of seeing, they went to the sepulchre.

And what a sight awaited them! The stone was gone. There was no Roman guard. There was a celestial custodian. An angel was there. Young, and beautiful, and bright, and pure, and *sweet the Scriptures paint him*. And he spoke. His

syllables were human, but his tones divine. He announced the Resurrection, the grand fact in the history of earth, and, so far as we know, in the biography of God. But what was an angel to heart-broken Mary? She would rather see *one* Jesus than a million of angels. She *saw* Jesus! She heard him talk. He said "Mary!" That "Mary" made the high noon of heaven burst into the heart of the midnight of her love's sorrow. It restored to harmony the chaos to which, to her, his death had reduced the universe.

Brethren, heaven makes its revelations to the heart rather than to the head, to love rather than to intellect, to activity rather than to despair, to Mary rather than to John and Peter. She went with her spices, weeping for sheer broken-heartedness, but still going under the impulses of love, doing her last best little offices to what remained of Jesus, and she saw a vision which ever since has kept the world alive and bright and warm with the hopes of immortality. *She saw the risen Jesus!* As his birth without his resurrection would have been nothing, so to loving hearts, it seems to me, Mary of Magdala must seem as favoured a personage as the Virgin Mother. Mary of Nazareth saw him first when he was born to his earthly and human work; Mary of Magdala saw him first when he was born again from the tomb into his glory of Prince Saviour. The latter was the grander vision.

That empty sepulchre is to us a subject of contemplation, and a teacher of great lessons.

There are some sepulchres from which we would not desire to roll the stone away. The past has many such sepulchres. In that past there is a sepulchre in which corpses lie—corpses of sinful facts: corpses of broken vows: corpses of old hates: corpses of old loves. Oh! that we could never see them more: Oh! that we could forget their very names.

But there is another sepulchre of the past where there do lie some things very sweet, holy, and precious. We long to live those memories over again. We long to walk again, hand in *hand*, with child-like trust, beside the Galilean Lake, or climb

the Judean mount with one who lies asleep and has gone into the memory-sepulchre. Let us keep our spices ready. When the bitter Sabbath which has followed the sorrowful interment shall have passed, there will be an eastern morn, and as we run sobbing to the sepulchre we shall see the splendors of the face and hear the music of the voice of our risen and immortal Lord.

From thoughts—perhaps we should call them reveries—like these, let us listen to some of the lessons of the stone that was rolled away.

Perhaps the very first should be the importance of not dwelling on difficulties in Christian work, and in the discharge of the duties which love brings.

What is worse than selfish grief? It is so benumbing, so degrading, so blinding! We are to bring ourselves into subjection for the benefit of others; and, even when no benefit seems promised, go forward in becoming tenderness toward even a dead hope. Jesus may be dead, but he has not left the earth. He is buried; he is yonder, in Joseph's garden. I cannot bring my Lord, my love, to life again. I cannot make him hear my complaints of love, nor give him fresh assurance of my devotion. But his remains are there. I can, at least, go *towards* them, if I cannot be very near him. I can carry sweet spices and lay them at the tomb's door, if I cannot enter and anoint the dear limbs of my dear dead. So Mary and the other women seemed to think, and went sorrowfully forward in the dull, drear, morning twilight toward the lonely garden grave, to find, at sunrise, an angel there, and Jesus there, and the resurrection there.

Brethren, there are always difficulties in any Christian or Christly work. Whether you are to build up a family, or a church, or a school, or a hospital, there will be two classes of difficulties: one the difficulties that you *do* know, and the other the difficulties that you do *not* know. The women knew that the stone was there. When Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea left the garden, "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary" sat over against the sepulchre, and probably staid there until the suggestion of the chief priests and Pharisees had been carried

out by Pilate, and the great stone had been set. Somehow the knowledge had come to them as they went forward. They sobbed to one another, "Who shall roll away the stone?" recollecting that it was so very great that the three women could not remove it. But they probably did *not* know that the guard had been set. These would naturally come later in the evening, and the women may not have known of their appointment.

So with us. In every great thing there are difficulties, some known to us, others not. But there are also proceedings upon the part of God that we do not know, and those proceedings are *always* *aidful* to those who are going about doing their duty. Remember that the women knew of the set and sealed stone, but they did not know that heaven had broken into that grave in the night, and Jesus was gone forth, and angelic servitors had been left to give them sweet and cheering messages.

It is not my work to roll away the stone, but it is my duty to go to the grave. Nay, we will not talk of duty. Love sends me to Jesus, living or dead. *My* love does that. *His* love will see that the stone is rolled away. Love sends me in the chilly twilight of morning to do something for my Lord. There is going to be a great difficulty in the way. I have not strength enough, skill enough, money enough, friends enough, to take that difficulty away. Well, I can at least go and lay my tear-wet cheek against the stone and wish. I can carry my spices and ointment nearer to my Lord.

If Mary and the other women had said, "The stone is there; the stone is great; we cannot remove it; why go out on so useless an errand so early in the morning?" they would have seen neither the angel nor Jesus. If you cannot move the stone away, go at least up to the stone. Perhaps you will not have to move it. How many a thing which might have issued in a grand success, if men had had the courage to go a few steps forward, have failed because they said, "The stone is very great: who shall roll it away for us?"

But we must not be visionary in the sense of forgetting that

there are difficulties. Men who undertake great works, like the Mont Cenis tunnel, the Atlantic cable, a railway across a continent, know that there are palpable, vast, and costly difficulties. There are costs which are *certainly* known, which civil engineers can readily calculate; and there are *probable* costs, which hinge upon conjectured contingencies; and there are *possible* costs which may be brought to light by the progress of the work. The men who furnish the capital necessarily look at these. They do not want to be in company with the man whose tower was not finished, of whom the Master told us. But, nevertheless, they *go forward*.

Immense difficulties had to be overcome to give us the Central and Erie and Pacific Railways, our Continental and sub-ocean telegraphs, and other great works; but they *have* been brought into existence, and stand to-day, because men who are not visionary had the nerve to dare to take up great burdens, and the shoulders broad and strong enough to bear them. Notwithstanding the difficulties, the women went straight to the sepulchre, bearing their spices, which they bought before the Sabbath, considering the difficulties, expecting nothing fantastic; in simplicity, doing all that they could, and then yielding themselves to the law of love; "and when they looked, they saw that the stone *was* rolled away."

The apostle says that "faith works by love." It is a grand truth. And another is, that *love works for faith*. It is said that love is blind. I do not believe it. Love is full of eyes. The sharp-eyed Intellect—that Polyphemus of the brain which has only one eye—may miss many a thing. Even Cunning, that carries a calcium lamp, may fail to see many a thing. But Love will see all. Love is the highest philosophy. Love is the eyes of faith. Love is the hand of faith. Be not faithless, and then you will not be loveless nor blind.

Oh! how many things the heart of loving faith beholds which are hid from others. When Caleb and Joshua went up to see the land of Canaan, they *had* companions from all the tribes, and *all these men only saw Anakim*. giants, difficulties, troubles,

and obstacles. Joshua and Caleb saw a land flowing with milk and honey. On the resurrection morning the disciples sat in their rooms, and put their heads down between their knees, and saw nothing but a future of impenetrable, horrible darkness. The women, believing that they owed duties to him who loved them as long as he was alive (duties which were not vacated by the fact that he had died in disgrace), these women, not having wholly lost their faith in Jesus by reason of the cloud under which he had gone into his grave, were on the path of faithful, loving activity when they saw the stone rolled away, and beheld the beloved Jesus alive again, walking in the garden.

Remember, brethren, that cheap things are worthless things, and easy virtues poor virtues. Jonah's gourd grew in a night, but it died in a day. Oaks have harder growth and longer endurance. The highest and noblest of our duties are achieved through the greatest and most appalling difficulties.

Lastly, brethren, in all our work let us fall back on God's co-operation. He always helps good work. Let me assure each little child in the congregation that the Lord will not let anything good be attempted but that he will have a hand in it. He has profound and incessant interest in all human beings, in the simplest things, if they are done for him. If you are a mother, try to raise your child for glorious manhood, and the Lord will help you to fashion that boy into the great lawyer, or great physician, or great merchant, or great preacher, or simple, grand, private citizen of solid worth. If you are a man, try to build up a church, a college, a journal, any useful institution, and do it for the sake of the Lord. If you are poor, make some sacrifice for Jesus. He will help. What you try to do for him he will be profoundly interested to fetch forward toward success. The mechanic who is building a house knows that he must shape the timbers and lay the brick. God will not do that. But while the man is doing the man's part, he does it with full faith that God will do his part. The mechanic would not strike another blow if he felt that the law of gravitation might be *annulled*, or even suspended. So the farmer sows his seed,

knowing that God will not do that for him, but he sows, relying on the divine promise that seed time and harvest, day and night, shall continue. It must be so in our religious life. We must go out to the sepulchre. We must go forward as far as we can in the discharge of every duty, and stop only when we can go no further, and stand there ten thousand years if need be, and, having done our best, wait until God does the rest. "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the workman worketh but in vain." But the Lord *will* "build," and the Lord *will* "keep."

We must do our duty, merely our duty, but all our duty; not waiting to hear that the guard has been withdrawn, and the sacred government seal broken, and the great stone rolled away. We must go towards Jesus. Just as early, just as quickly, just as lovingly as we may, we must go. But, having bought and brought our spices, they may be wholly unneeded. Our sobs at the size of the stone may be turned into exclamations of joyful wonder at seeing the sight of the shining angels; and instead of laying our aching heads against a hard, cold stone, we may be permitted to fall and clasp the warm feet of our risen Love and Lord.

THE IDEA OF GOD AS AFFECTED BY SCIENCE.

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

"He worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth."—DANIEL vi. 27.

THESE words are taken from the proclamation issued by King Darius. That monarch had been holding in mind and heart some inferior order of god. When Daniel came as a slave or prisoner to the king's court and unfolded that idea of Jehovah that, by comparison, stood forth so grandly in the city of Jerusalem, Darius became filled with amazement, and casting away his contemptible divinity, he issued a decree in many languages, and ordered it to be published in all the great eastern empire, to the effect that he had found a God worthy of worship, a Being that could work wonders in heaven and earth.

The picture formed of the Creator of the world has varied according to the strength or culture of the age through which the idea is passing. To the American Indian, God is only a good spirit, the owner of a happy hunting ground a great deal larger than their own forest or plains. To the Hindoo, God is a great, idle, luxurious prince, passing his time in pleasure or sleep. The Greek Zeus or the Latin Jupiter was only a great statesman and warrior and judge combined. The greater an age became in its mental and moral development, the richer its offerings to the character of its Deity. The idea of God is

always the store-house in which each nation treasures up all its slow accumulations of the true, the beautiful, and the good.

It does not follow from this that God is only an intellectual image, a shadow of man's mind seen externally, just as man may see the shadow of his body in a glass. There are those who declare the idea of God to be only this external projection of human thought. Against such an inference we may array the various human conceptions of the sky or the stars; and inasmuch as the Persians once thought the sun so near that they shot arrows at the monster that was eating it, in a great eclipse, and since even Herodotus thought the trade winds blew the sun around to different points in summer and winter, we might affirm that the sun is what the mind makes it, and that, as Mr. Ingersoll says "an honest God is the noblest work of man," our present sun is the noblest work of fancy. To a child the ocean is only as wide as a river, or as wide as from the home to the school-house, but as the child advances in mental development, this same ocean widens. But think what the child may, and what the man may, the ocean is not the outward projection of their different ideas, the noblest work of man, but there it lies a great reality, and man may think it only a river, or only a pool, it will not shrink or swell to his wish. Hence the ever-changing ideas which the human race cherishes as to its Deity prove only that man passes through many gradations of thought, a fact which no more blots out the Heavenly Father than it blots out the stars or the ocean.

The modifications which the conceptions of the divine nature constantly undergo ought to be expected, and confessed as perfectly legitimate, in a world where all truth is approached by gradual advances, and where nothing is seen to-day in the colours of yesterday. The progress of the human race should no more reveal itself in making better estimates of the heavenly bodies and of earthly arts and sciences, than in making new estimates of the great Source of all the things and phenomena of earth. That each tribe has cherished a peculiar conception of God and heaven and hell weighs no more against the absolute fact of these entities

than the notion of Plutarch that the moon were a bunch of vapour should destroy belief in the moon as an absolute external reality.

The better argument is not, therefore, on the side of Mr. Ingersoll, of our west, or Mr. Conway, of London, who declare God to be a mental image, personified outwardly; but it is upon the side of old King Darius, who confessed ignorance in the past, and who proclaimed in many languages that he had passed over to a new deity, Jehovah, and he wished his nation to follow him. The varying idea which mankind forms of God affords no proof that there is no unchanging, personal Creator, but only indicates that mankind passes through successive stages of light, and is throwing itself forward toward a knowledge of its Maker. The God is unchanging. Man passes from infancy to manhood in the search of the truth.

The thought which I desire you to reflect upon this morning is the one proclaimed by the old king:—the wonderful works of God. It touched the spirit of Darius that there was a Being who could accomplish such strange things on earth or in heaven.

In the classic ages there seems to have been little conception of divine power. The earth was the centre of a little system, the stars being not far away. Hell was inside of this earth, and heaven was a garden of Hesperides, an Elysian country a few degrees north of Greece and Italy. So humble was the public estimate of God, that one of the Roman emperors asked the people to declare him a god; and another drove iron chariots furiously over a bridge of brass that he might equal Jupiter in the art of thundering. Herod proclaimed himself a god.

In our day such scenes and pretensions would be sure proofs of insanity. Any modern hero who should call the attention of the community to any resemblance between himself and Deity would be pitied at once as insane. Although our age is declared to be sceptical and infidel, yet so far as it retains in its soul a confession of a Creator, he is a glorious being, such as no Roman, or Greek, or even Darius dreamed of in the distant times.

It is possible that there was less atheism in early periods than *in the present*, resulting from the fact that the ideal of God lay

nearer to the ideal of man, and from such a hero as Alexander the public could easily pass to such a superhuman being as Hercules or Jupiter. Juno and Cleopatra, Minerva and Zenobia, were not far apart. The gigantic studies of all science and inquiry of late centuries have widened the gulf between man and God by declaring that there is but one God, and that he is measureless, formless, unthinkable. The telescope and the microscope have not only revealed the secrets of the material universe, showing us millions of inhabitants in a drop of water, and pointing out stars so far away that their light has not come to us in less than a million years, but these instruments and the studies that have rallied around them, like the nine muses that gathered around the harp of Apollo, have so magnified the name and office of the Holy One, that many a mind is almost overwhelmed by the greatness of the Heavenly Father, and stands upon the border of unbelief because the thought of such a Creator is too vast for the heart. When Job had only remembered who it was that had laid the foundations of the earth, and placed for the sea a decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther," he confessed he had uttered things too wonderful, and he sank down into a new humiliation of dust and ashes. But since Job, the universe has grown yet more upon our hands. That sea which Job beheld in wonder, and to whose waves God had appointed banks, was as nothing as compared with those waves of light which, issuing from fixed stars larger than our sun, flow outward for millions of years, and yet find no banks where their soft sweet beatings are stayed. When we think of our own sun, and recall what an ocean of light rolls all around him, bathing all the planets within the distance of three thousand millions of miles in his warmth and light, the Atlantic Oceans of earth fade from the mind as being no longer emblems of the Almighty. In that ocean of light which rolls perpetually around the sun, six thousand millions of miles across, it is not the ships of Tarshish that float; but there the planets sail along, passing through summer and winter, and one of them bears upon its bosom a

thousand millions of intelligent loving souls, with life and death, smiles and tears for all. These waves of light beat against all objects, but without violence. They do not wear away the rock, they make the moss and lichen grow upon its surface; they do not smite the blossoms and the fruit, but they paint the rose, and make the peach and the vintage put on their beautiful colourings. Say and think all you can of our system of planets, and yet you have not passed over the vestibule of the universe. It lies beyond. The most imaginative astronomer puts aside his instrument at last, and joins Job in saying, "These things are too wonderful for me."

"As sparks fly upward from the fiery blaze,
So stars are born and suns spring up from thee;
And as the spangles of the sun's bright rays
Gleam from the silvery snow, the pageantry
Of heaven's bright army glitters in thy praise."

Under the revelations of science the name of God becomes daily laden with power, and indeed has already wholly outgrown the grasp, and even the highest imagination, of minds, either scientific or theological. It remains for us only to say, if the universe is so measureless, equally measureless must be its Creator. But as the incomprehensibleness of the universe does not lead us to deny the fact of it, so the mystery of God may not lead us one step toward an unbelief in his existence or personality.

I have alluded to the wonderful works of the Creator only on account of the inference which follows, namely: he must be a God of wonderful works also in the world of spirit. The deity that can so pour out the numberless stars in the depths of space is such a power that to him the immortality of man is easy of accomplishment. All the discoveries which the telescope announces, only tell us how easy a work it were for the Great Father to declare his children immortal, and to bear them from earth to heaven, or from the mortal to the immortal life.

Perhaps in the public mind nothing battles more against the full belief in an immortal life than the strangeness of such an

event. Men of plain every-day fact, men of regular law and routine, measure the universe by the scenes around them, and do not feel that this mortal body will rise from the grave and soar away to realms new and beautiful. Such thoughts and feelings are all wrong. It was this measuring by the present which gave the ancients only a Hercules or Jupiter for a god. This measuring by the present gives us a tomb, instead of a heaven. As wider science has come and given us a more powerful and more wonderful Creator, and has carried us beyond the old estimate, so it should bear us away from any humble estimate of man, and leave us to confess the perfect ease with which the Great Father can bear us all over the tomb into immortality. He who made our sun, and ordered it to stand for ever and make spring, summer, autumn, and winter come—come to earth and to other planets in their turn—and who ordered a thousand millions of rational beings to come to this earth and watch these changing seasons, and move about in these beloved days—this God will find no difficulty in caring for these children on the other side of the grave. After the mind takes a hasty survey of the universe, and has come back from those awful distances in which the stars float—comes back in the flying chariot of light, as it were, and stands in our cemetery, by the grave of a little child—it cannot but say, “Poor child! after what I have seen, thy immortality is easy.” The power that marshalled the legions of stars, and which holds them in their places, needs only to whisper, and all the sleeping millions of earth’s bosom would wake to a new being. To man, another life seems difficult. To many, it seems impossible. But this distrust comes from a forgetfulness of that all-pervading Power that could shake all the stars at once, as the zephyr jars the spider’s web.

The mystery of futurity is no greater than the mystery of the past. For hundreds, even thousands of years, all the deep thinkers, from Plato to Tyndall, have been trying to find how life came into the insensate world. Over man, whole generations of study, deep and patient, has sunk like snow in the sea, and

yet no one has found the gateway by which the dust of the universe became such a creature as the thinking, loving, human soul. It is not only before futurity the heart often feels tempted to sit down and say, "Impossible! how can there be a second life?" but just as powerlessly the mind looks back and declares the coming of man to be impossible. And I suppose there have been moments in the life of each of you when you have felt that there is no such thing as the human race, and that you are only a strange dream that will soon dissolve and leave all to be nothing. One of the ancients was so perplexed over the impossibility of life that he kept saying, "I think; therefore, I exist" (*Puto, ergo sum.*) The difficulty of the case reaches out in both directions; and under the influence of this mystery some philosophers have declared that there is no external world; others have said that the internal world, or man's being, is only a part of God.

Thus it is not the future of life alone that seems incredible at times, but it is also the origin of man that presents a parallel difficulty. The gateway to life is just as impossible as the gateway to a second existence.

The only escape known to me from these deep clouds is found in breaking over the daily experience of man, and in casting the heart upon a God that did wonderful things before man's cradle, and can repeat them after man's tomb. The argument of Hume that miracles are contrary to experience, and are therefore incredible, is too narrow. It assumes man as a measuring line of the world. But the creation of such a star as our sun is wholly beyond human experience or conception, and hence impossible, if Hume is correct. The daily events of earth are no criterion of the divine events, past or to come. Hence I know of no better conclusion than that we are in the hands of a God that doeth wonderful things, and who is as ready to lead man to the shores of another world as he was to lead him to the shores of this life. We conclude, therefore, that with God the immortality of man is an easy result. He that has opened *the gates of a past eternity*, and sent through them such stars,

and suns, and planets, and that among this host has sent forth this beautiful earth to roll in a sea of light and produce trees and flowers and men, with their cities and arts, and homes and friendships and loves, can open one more portal, and land all his children upon shores happier, and purer, and deathless.

It is wonderful that persons seeing the great universe around them should doubt the possibility of a heaven. The God that made our sun, into which you could place fifty millions of globes like our moon—the God that made the planet Jupiter—can, by a single wish, call the dead of earth from their sleep in the quiet churchyard or in the great ocean's depths.

One result seems to me to be coming from science, against which we all should defend our souls. Science has done a vast service in that it has helped to rid the world of any such gods as the Jupiter, and Juno, and Hercules of the past, and of any such god as has been believed in by some more recent sects. Science has combined with the New Testament in lifting the world up toward an Almighty before whose throne the poor deities of early ages sink into pitiable dust. With Christ unfolding the love of God, and with science unfolding his power, no Herod or Cæsar any more can ever appear to ask for divine honours. The Testament has given us a Heavenly Father, science has given us an Almighty. So far, all well. But now the result, I fear, and even seem to witness, is, that science is teaching us that God is doing all his wonders in regions apart from the soul. The wonders of nature are displacing the wonders of the spirit. While science is speaking of star depths, and is proving the vast cycles of years, millions upon millions, that have passed since the sun's great fires were first kindled, no voices have come with equal eloquence and learning and attractiveness to plead for the "spirit depths," and for the millions of years that await mind and heart in the hereafter. We do not expect the natural sciences to teach religion, any more than we expect the physician to teach law, or the lawyer to teach medicine. What we fear is, that science, by its peculiar attractiveness, and by its freedom from any conflict with original sin (for the heart is not

enmity against science, and neither, indeed, can be), will find its way into the public mind, and reveal a God that doeth wonders in nature far more rapidly than religion can reveal a God that doeth wonders for the soul. Science is so powerful, and the pulpit so unpopular and so weak, that under the predominance of science the universe grows, and under the feebleness of religion the soul recedes. What a grand conception have all modern men of the universe! What a humble conception and humble hope of the soul are cherished by the very ones to whom the universe is so vast! Is it possible that man is being eclipsed by the material realm! Is it possible that in presence of the new heavens, which have so receded since the days of Job, when the morning stars were so near that earth heard them singing together, and the sons of God shouting for joy, the soul has become broken-hearted, and looks to the tomb as its destiny! Is it this awful magnificence of nature that leads man at last to say—

“The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,
Be scattered around and together be laid.
So the young and the old, and the low and the high,
Shall moulder to dust, and together shall lie.

“The infant a mother attended and loved,
The mother that infant’s affection who proved,
The husband that mother and infant who blessed,
All, all, are away to their dwellings of rest.”

It is to be feared that much of the modern doubt as to a future life has come from a form of thought that has given to God a universe that exhausts a care and power which once were seen to go out only toward the soul. Look back just four hundred years, and mark how all science and all art and all poetry pointed to God only in his relations to the soul. The stars were nothing but lamps of the night hung up for man. When Angelo painted he found no theme great enough away from the glorious or terrific destiny of man. Mark his “*Last Judgment*.” The wonders of the Deity in all those days were

his creation, and salvation, and damnation of man. Only two great objects rose up above the surface—God and the soul. What scenes the painters saw, the poets sang. For seven hundred years the civilized world had been singing the “*Dies iræ, dies illæ*”—

“Oh, day of wrath! oh, day of wonder!
When the earth shall burst asunder,
Wrapped in cloud and smoke and thunder.”

In those days no Stuart Mill could have gone to his tomb feeling that there was to be no morning again to him or the loved friends gone before or to follow, for all the voices around him of mind and heart would have kept the universe before him great in only two phenomena, the soul and its God. Our painters paint landscapes, the past painted only religion.

No possible reproach may attach to science in our day. It has done little but explore and announce fact, and if the leaders in spiritual things have not been able to hold the world to its old-deep consciousness of the soul's worth here and hereafter, we cannot affirm where the guilt, if guilt there be, should lie. It is enough for the lesson of the morning if we declare that by some means, and all means, we must go back to the feeling that the God who doeth wonders is above all doing wonders for the human heart.

Like King Darius, we must proclaim a God of great events, and, like the old saints, must see in the resurrection and the mighty throng coming up from earth's graves, a moral act of God, which natural science, in all its glorious unfoldings of the works of Deity, can never hope to surpass.

Never did any age so need the Christ as our era now clamours for his life and teachings. While the thoughts of men and the perfection of instrumental study in the universe have so enlarged the world that man seems in danger of being overshadowed by the stupendous realm of matter, and seems worthy of being forgotten of the great Creator, we need the whole spiritualism of Christ to whisper to us *perpetually*, “Fear not, ye are the children of

this God. He is not oblivion for you. He is love. In Father's house are many mansions. He has sent me to offer you a paradise."

Oh, the splendour of the universe, the inexpressible splendour of it, as it has gleamed through the unbarred gates of science the past half hundred years! The world needs but one shield now to protect it, to stand by the grave and keep the heart from breaking on its brink. It needs him who stands for its immortality, and who, pointing toward the spirit world, says, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

THE BIBLE.

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine," &c.—2 TIMOTHY iii. 16.

NO one book has come anywhere near exerting upon the human race the influence that has flowed from the volume called "The Bible." Although there is no method by which we may take up the civilized nations and find just what part of their intellectual and moral stores came from art, and all natural powers, and from the old classic world, and then what treasures came solely from the Holy Scriptures, yet there is an approximate estimate of these various agencies, and making this estimate there will be few to deny that the Bible is the greatest single force acting upon the immense object called society. The church of all civilization is founded upon it. Away from its presence, in India, or China, or old Rome and Greece, man's religion was scarcely worthy of the name of a religion in either its worship or works. The worship which Egypt, or India, or the Greek and Roman states offered was almost wholly unworthy of either a God or a man, for it was a strange mingling of a little spirituality with much grossness—of a little light with deep shadow. Vice and crime formed a part of the ancient heathen religions, and often the temples of the gods were similar to the modern saloons of *Bacchus* and *Venus*.

Whoever would examine the claims of the Bible justly, must compare its separate parts with the surroundings of that part ; that is, he must not compare the character of Abraham with the best men that came two thousand years afterward under some new era, but must see him in the light of his own epoch ; and thus estimating the merits of that patriarch, he will be seen great almost to the point of miracle. If you would see Abraham aright, behold his path as lying in the very wilderness of society, as leading along where there was no art, no music, no painting, no school-house, no forum, no senate, but only a large world quite given up to agriculture, slavery, polygamy, and war. So far as we know, no great thinker like a Plato or an Aristotle had graced the world, much less the Abrahamic world ; but the good patriarch had to rise up alone, out of himself, as the oak grows up from its own little seed ; and with this remembrance in mind, that path of Abraham, with a supreme God at the end of it, a God whom heathen nations had not discovered ; that path followed by a faith which, in our far-off century, is the emotion which still guides ; that path seen as leading to a city that had foundations, shines as never shone the track of a meteor, or the wake of a ship in a phosphorescent sea. Thus, when the Bible, in its separate parts, is compared with the world lying around it, it is seen to be in advance of mankind at large, as though some great leader were in it, guiding the multitude slowly along.

Moses, too, must be seen in the atmosphere of his own age. To expect him to have opposed slavery as did our Phillips, or Garrison, or Wilberforce, would be exactly the same as to expect him to have built steamboats or railways. The world had not come to any conception of the equality of man, and it was not the plan of God that all that Moses should say or do should belong to some future era, and that, living in the world's infancy, Moses should speak as though in the world's noontide. The God of inspiration is the God we see in nature, and hence his inspired men will advance by slow steps, not stepping over vast ages, but *omitting nothing*, walking patiently over each year and hour of

each century. It was enough that Moses was *partly* in advance of his own multitude, in advance in the ten commandments and in many minor laws, and it injures nothing that in respect to slavery and polygamy and war and cruelty he stood with both feet in the great centuries beneath himself and around himself. That in his ten commandments he reached forward and uttered words which will apply to the world's last generation, this is the evidence of a divine legation. The divineness of a leader or of a book does not repose upon the perfection of the man or the book in all the minutiae, but in some great true outreachings worthy of a God. In a world of progress a starting-point of perfection is impossible: progress implies imperfection. Hence the defective personal character of Abraham and Moses and David argues nothing against the idea that these were divinely approved leaders of religion, for as society moves forward only by slow steps, so the leaders of it always stand partly in the light, partly in the shadow. Perfect human beings in any large number would imply an almost perfect society, and hence a society that needed no Bible, inasmuch as it had already reached the great moral summit. That humble condition of society that made leaders necessary would almost make it certain that even those leaders would come forth with some frailty, because progress assumes imperfection. Abraham was a divine leader, not because he was a perfect man, but simply because his faith in the one living and true God ran out beyond the faith of his age.

Of all books the Bible seems most honest. Its men and women move before us in a life the most real. The art of the Middle Age Church painted according to an ideal, and when it grouped the disciples on the seashore fishing, it bedecked them in gorgeous robes as though they were fishing in the palace of a king. In the coloured frescoes Paul the orator is dressed in gaudy raiment, in a purple robe, and some of the almost barefoot apostles ride in royal chariots. But the Bible knows nothing of such an idealism. It is a realist. It picks up its mortals just as they stood; and if Jacob put goat skins on his wrists, and if

Abraham told a falsehood; if Moses slew an Egyptian and hid his body in the sand; if David sent Uriah to the front of the battle that the "beauteous wife" might be made a widow; all these facts of the case appear in the sacred page in their real deformity. As the photographic art will not make the homely beautiful, nor catch a landscape without catching the shadow of deformity as readily as the shadow of beauty, so the historic genius of the Bible gathers up all virtue and vice equally, and transfers it to the record. The history in the Scriptures is not a composition picture, but a photograph; with Abraham not only a man of large faith, but of human infirmity; a photograph with David not only as a poet and king, but as a man capable of great dishonour. Thus it comes to pass that we do not see a Hebrew nation adorned in the gay robes of a modern frescoe; not a nation that had only a worship of a living and true God, but also of a nation that sold slaves and stole land, and in many ways revealed all the frailties of mankind in that dark period. Before that picture the Bible student, if he would be just, must select those features which belong to perpetual religion. When the painters of the last century painted Franklin and Washington, they threw upon their subjects the costumes of that day; and now, when the days have come in which that costume is all opposed to our taste, and excites a smile, we rise at once above it, and see the face, the eye, forehead, mouth of the Franklin and Washington, and bless the artists that they left for us such glorious lines of manhood. So all the worthies from Adam to David stand in the Bible in the costume of a far-off era, and we must go away from Abraham's cloak of deceit and David's romance and sin, and look upon all that was beyond their age and that pointed to a glorious future.

The Bible is a vast embalment of religious fact—an embalment that reaches over a period of four thousand years; and for that reason it merits the study of all thoughtful beings. It is the most special history of religion which the world possesses, and not only the most special history of religion, but of the most *valuable* religion the world has known. Compare the gods

of the Vedas or of Rome and Greece with the one God of the Bible—compare the character of Jehovah and Jupiter—and it will at once appear that the Bible is the history of the best form of religion known to man. It is not simply an embalment of facts, but of the best facts yet gathered up regarding the soul and its Maker. Between the religious character of Adam and that of Jesus Christ what a wide sea rolls!—and yet that wide distance is quite fully filled up by characters which grade from the first, the humblest condition of morals, up to that perfection portrayed in the Nazarene. How untaught! how unreflecting! how frail was the religious nature of the first name in the long catalogue! He is represented as disobeying his Creator for a reward of some sweet fruit. His estimate of sin and virtue, his conception of the character of God, his consciousness of the worth of human character, were all so feeble, that at the invitation of his weak companion he defied the whole moral universe. But the Bible sets forth from a humble origin of religion, and follows along until it comes to a day when a Christ having been shown all the empires of the world, and having been promised them if he would forget God, stands as unmoved by the temptation as though only a wind had whispered and no words had been spoken. What were all the empires of the universe to a Christ whose soul had been thus emptied of honour? Between the Adam who fell so easily in the garden, and the Jesus who stood upon the high mountain in such grandeur, a long way intervenes; and yet the Old and New Testaments pass along this way, and point out all the qualities of soul that lie between the Adam and the Jesus. There is a perpetual ascent all the way until in Daniel and Isaiah, and then St. John and St. Paul, we see the traces of that perfect nature which came to earth in the Redeemer. The earliest picture of man which the Bible gives us was painted six thousand years back; there stands its conception of woman, too, in that being who knew so little of the great world destined in all ages and continents to call her “mother,” and who knew so little of the outcome of sin or righteousness. The Roman mother pointed to her *sons* and said, “These are my jewels;” and

all along loving mothers have pointed to some little group with love and pride, as being the buds and branches of their own life; but Eve of the Bible could have surpassed all, for she might have looked at all the uncounted millions of earth, and have waved her hand toward the east and west and said: All your multitudes, and all your arts, and learning, and happiness will look back to my bosom for their origin, for the love that kissed them all in life's first light. This woman the Bible holds in its old embalment, the greatest and weakest woman of all.

When our miners sink a shaft in the prairies to strike the coal formation, far down they find the images of beautiful plants lying like lacework spread out upon tables of ebony—images of ferns and leaves and flowers which millions of years ago, perhaps, ceased, from some change of climate, to open in the cold spring time, and hence to fall in the autumn. There, however, these pictures lie, telling us of a time when perpetual summer time reigned where we now live, and that where we shall soon see drifting snows and fields of ice in our December, once tropical birds sang and fluttered in palm trees, and flowers filled the whole day and night with perfume. But if the God of nature has written down a brief but grand account of the trees and blossoms that preceded us, why may we not glory in the Bible as being a rock upon which the early shadow of the human family fell, and where, under those images, God, with his own finger, wrote down the laws of life and of spiritual salvation?

One of the most striking facts of the Scriptures is the unity of religious doctrine that runs through it. It is not important that we make any remarks now regarding the geological, or political, or social ideas of the great book. The world is yet debating over the meaning of the book in these regards. Saving time and escaping controversy, we speak only of the path of salvation that winds through those sacred pages, and say that it is all one path from Genesis to the Apocalypse. Not that the way is exactly, to the least detail, the same all the whole distance, for we know there is a growing beauty and light *toward the close*, and a grand hallelujah and strewing of palm-

branches at last, which greeted not the eye or ear of Abraham or Elijah; but in great general doctrines that alone are worthy of being the basis of a religion there is a unity of the whole piece perfectly wonderful in a drama so long, and written by so many composers between Moses and St. Paul. The idea of a sacrifice appears in the offering which Abel made, as truly as in the self-surrender of Jesus Christ; the Redeemer which Job hoped in the days far away, and the atonement which each altar witnessed, moved straight forward toward him who became Redeemer and Atonement for all; the oneness of God—the more remarkable an idea because all the surrounding air upon every hand was full of the forms of a thousand deities, from a sacred elephant or serpent to an Olympian Jove—pervades the book without any compromise or hesitation; and then the ideas for human practice are all one in outline through the long period. The heart was to be absorbed in Abraham's day and in John's day by the same faith; both these widely separated souls were to live, and the element of trust was one, whether it led the former to journey not knowing whither he went, or led the latter to see a city of twelve gates from the prison of Patmos. Jacob, in his dream of faith and love, saw the angels going to the sky just as they flew about in the Apocalypse two thousand years afterward. A new heart, re-fashioned by divine power, is as visible in the Hebrew purifications and in the prayers of David as in the interview of Nicodemus when he is informed that he must be born of the Spirit. As for charity, it was foreshadowed all through the Mosaic age, and from the early voice, "Where is thy brother?" moved along till it found an eternal home and culminated in the golden rule. Repentance is a gateway of salvation all the way from the tears of the penitential psalms to the weeping of Peter and Magdalen. And as for a holy life, from Enoch, who walked with God, to him who said, "Blessed are the pure in heart," there is no shadow of turning anywhere.

Thus there are cardinal ideas that are inwoven into the Bible, and shine forth as threads of gold in all parts of the long fabric.

And in these great doctrines will repose for ever the worth of the book to mankind. Not only its worth, but here, also, is the promise of its long or perpetual life. Whenever science has come up against a text or a chapter, it has been powerless to injure, because forth came against science these great general truths of the soul and God. Christ stands, too, as the culmination of all these grand ideas. The meditation, the sacrifice, the faith, hope, and charity, the perfect life of man, the love and mercy and justice of God, the resurrection to a new career, the union of man and God, are all so gathered into one in this human-divine being, that in him the Holy Scriptures closed the long-open records, and said, "It is finished."

With such a volume before it, the mind that reads it should be expanded by its breadth. Compared with those great doctrines which begin to rise in the Mosaic age, and which reach their zenith in Christ, the sectarian ideas of yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow become only secondary—the garments worn by an age, but no great part of an age's soul or joy or usefulness. Presbyterianism or Methodism is a good, but in those fundamental truths which bind the Old and New Testaments together, which sound forth their music in the Psalms of David and Gospel of John, that transformed men in the old centuries and men in the new—these forms of religion disappear and are lost as the leaf that falls away from the great forest in the autumn night. And no man has ever sat down over a sectarian idea without teaching his soul the small of the Bible or religion at the expense of the great. In clasping to his bosom his special articles, he has expelled the great God and the great Saviour. He has placed his eyes so close to his church book, that he has with it eclipsed a universe; just as our moon, coming close to man's home, may eclipse a sun into which fifty millions of herself could be poured. The boy's marble held close to the eye will conceal all the heavens from his sight.

It is the Bible in its broadest significance that will fight the battle against all the foes of the present and future. There is a perfection and end of things even in this imperfect world. No

one will ever discover any sounds of music not in our eight notes. No one will discover a newsbearer of more rapid wing than the lightning. No architect will ever find a stronger form of opening than the arch. In religion there is a line which no progress can pass. In the Bible, including the life and work and words of Christ, a line is seen that lies at the limit of advance. Who can escape repentance and faith and charity, and the "new life?"

Go to this book, my friends, as to a canvas where God has painted the picture of the human race upon its great religious side—the heavenward gaze of the human countenance. In the east of our country large rocks have been excavated, upon which are the plain footprints of large birds, which ran along in that valley ten thousand years ago, when that rock was upon the surface, and was pliant as clay. Upon looking more closely, myriads of spots appear, showing in a moment that those creatures were hurrying before a storm of rain or hail, seeking some overhanging rocks or entangled vines that might come between them and the tempest. Opening the Bible, you see nothing else but the paths the human race has taken in its terrible but best and wisest hours to fly from the storm of sin and wrath that seems long ago to have burst upon this family of mortals. These tears of penitence, these words of Jesus, these letters, these gospels, are footprints of a mighty throng which have fled for refuge to a great Rock dimly seen in the Old Testament—plainly seen in the New. With sorrow and sin and the tomb pressing toward their spirits, here is the record of their flight and escape. With the same sorrow and sin around you, and the same tomb before, here is the Rifted Rock that waits for you with its welcome till all storms be overpast.

THE FEAR OF DEATH DESTROYED BY A SIGHT OF CHRIST.

BY THE REV. J. CAUGHEY.

“And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.—LUKE ii. 26.

OUR text is a joyful exclamation of a venerable old saint upon seeing the Lord’s Christ. It seems that when his eyes once looked upon Jesus, he never wished them to gaze on aught more on earth. Hence he exclaimed, “Now, Lord, lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.” We remark—

I.—That God always honours pre-eminently devoted men.

“Them that honour me,” saith the Lord, “will I honour.” Again, “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.” If you attentively observe the history of men who have risen far above the common standard of Christian experience, men of eminent piety, you will generally find that such men are signally honoured of God by some remarkable interpositions of Providence, by some special answers to prayer, by the bestowment of some gift, or by being rendered instrumental in the salvation of multitudes of immortal souls. These remarks could be borne out by a reference to the lives of holy men. With Abraham God conversed as a man with his friend, and when about to destroy Sodom, the matter was revealed to Abraham. Joseph was made the saviour of a nation. Moses was called up to Sinai to commune with the Deity for forty days. What a shield did

God hold over David ! Truly he was immortal till his work was done. Enoch and Elijah were taken to heaven without dying. An angel descended with Daniel into the lions' den to shut their mouths. A form like the Son of God is seen walking in the fiery furnace with the three Hebrew youths, so that the smell of fire does not pass upon them. Paul is saved in a storm at sea, while the waves were commissioned to dash to pieces the vessel; and an angel stands by him on the deck, and Paul's life is spared, and the lives of the whole crew are given to him. We might refer you to Wesley, Whitfield, and a long list of others, and in some way or another God has specially honoured every one of them. We have a case in point in our text. The time had come when the great Messiah was about to appear in the world, and this great fact God reveals to Simeon. It was revealed to him that he should not see death till he had seen the Lord's Christ. Undevout minds are too worldly, too apathetic, too dull to hear the secret whispering of heaven. 'Tis the spiritual ear alone that can hear the still small voice that comes across the universe from the spirit world; 'tis the spiritual eye alone that reads the secrets of eternity, that sees passing in review before it the realities of the hidden state. Some simple-hearted Christians were once returning from chapel; they had been to hear the holy Bramwell preach. One of them said to the other, "How is it that Mr. Bramwell has always something new to tell us?" "Ah!" said the other, "I can tell you how it is; he lives very much nearer the gates of heaven than many of us, and God tells him things he does not tell other people." And so it was with Simeon. He lived very much nearer the gates of heaven than many of his day; and God honoured him by telling him this great fact. It was revealed unto Simeon that he should not see death till he had seen the Lord's Christ.

II.—Simeon was a man of pre-eminent devotedness to God.

"And, behold," say the Scriptures, "there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon." Observes an eminent divine, "No doubt there were many persons in Jerusalem named Simeon besides this man, but there was none of the name who

merited the attention of God so much as he in the text." There are four things said about him in the text, every one of which is an evidence of his great devotedness. It is said of him that he was *just, devout*, that he *waited* for the consolation of Israel, and that the *Holy Ghost* was upon him. He had been reconciled to God. This is assumed, for without this there would have been no devoutness, no waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost never would have rested upon him. He believed the divine promise, and therefore waited for the consolation of Israel. He was devout; his soul went up in earnest prayer and thanksgiving to God, and the Holy Ghost was upon him. See what a beautiful gradation is here—*just man*—just before God, justified through the blood of the Lamb—just before men in all his actions, thus proving to the world that he was justified before God. A right heart and a right life. *Devout*: not a religion of mere forms and ceremonies, but devoutness of soul, *waiting* for all the fulness of Christ; and then the great, crowning point, the *Holy Ghost* resting upon him, attesting the divine approval, aiding him in his devotedness, guiding him into the temple to see the Lord's Christ. You cannot dispense with one of these elements from eminent piety, reconciliation, devoutness, a waiting upon God, and the possession of the Holy Ghost. Oh! what a sublime spectacle is a devout man—a man in audience with the Deity—a man breathing his thoughts, and those thoughts being taken up into the thoughts of the great God—a man on whom the gaze of Infinite Holiness is fixed with supreme delight—a man standing on the mount of communion, catching the warblings of the triumphant church, exclaiming,

"Hear I, or dream I hear, the distant strain sweet to the soul,
And tasting strong of heaven."

Than a man in communion with God, there is no sight on earth nor in heaven more sublime. A virtuous man said, a philosopher is the noblest work of God; but we would rather say a *Christian*, a devout man, is the noblest work of God. Such a man is *God's jewel, his friend*; 'tis with him God delights to dwell;

'tis to him God will tell his secrets ; on him confer his richest honours. Simeon was such a man ; God honoured him by telling him the great fact, that before death should close his eyes, he should see the Lord's Christ.

III.—That though Simeon was an eminently devoted man, he had great discouragement in obtaining a sight of the object he so extremely desired.

What Simeon wanted was to see the Lord's Christ. Unbelief would suggest to him, "Simeon, you are an old man, your day is almost ended, the snow of age is upon your head, your eyes are growing dim, your brow is wrinkled, your limbs totter, and death cannot be at a great distance ; and where are the signs of his coming ? You are resting, Simeon, on a phantom of the imagination—it is all a delusion." "No," replies Simeon, "I shall not see death till I have seen the Lord's Christ. Yes, I shall see him before I die." But unbelief would again suggest, "But remember, Simeon, many holy men have desired to see the Lord's Christ, but have died without the sight—men quite as holy as you are, who did service for God such as you have never done—and how do you suppose that you will be permitted to see the great Messiah ?" "Yes," says Simeon, "I shall see the Lord's Christ. These eyes will not be dimmed by the shadows of death till I have seen him ; God has said the word, and I shall see him for myself ; mine eyes shall behold him, and not another."

I imagine I see Simeon walking out on a fine morning along one of the lovely vales of Palestine, meditating on the great subject that filled his mind. He is met by one of his friends—"Peace be with you : have you heard the strange news ?" "What news ?" replied Simeon. "Do you not know Zacharias, the Priest ?" "Yes, well." "According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense in the Temple of the Lord, and the whole multitude of the people were praying without. It was the time of incense, and there appeared unto him an angel standing on the right side of the altar of incense, and told him that he should have a son, whose name should be

called John : one who should be great in the sight of the Lord, who should neither drink wine nor strong drink, and he should be filled with the Holy Ghost from his infancy, and that he should go before the Messiah in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord, and make ready a people prepared for the Lord. The angel was Gabriel, that stands in the presence of God, and because he believed not the angel, he was struck dumb." "Ah!" says Simeon, "that is an exact fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachi iv. 5, 6. This is the messenger of the Lord, to prepare the way; this is the forerunner; this is the morning star; the day dawn is not far off; the great Messiah is on his way—is nigh at hand. I shall not see death till I have seen the Lord's Christ. Hallelujah! the Lord shall suddenly come to his Temple." Simeon ponders these things in his heart, and time rolls on. I imagine I see Simeon again on his morning meditative walk. He is again accosted by one of his neighbours: "Well, Simeon, have you heard the news?" "What news?" "Why, there's a very singular story almost in everybody's mouth. A company of shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem were watching their flocks; it was the still hour of night, and the mantle of darkness covered the world; a bright light shone around the shepherds, a light above the brightness of the midday sun; they looked up, and just above them appeared an angel glowing in all the lovely hues of heaven; the shepherds became greatly terrified, and the angel said to them, 'Fear not, behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord; and, as a proof of what I say, if you will go to Bethlehem you will find him wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.' When the angel had finished his story, suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will to man.' The shepherds hastened away to Bethlehem, and found it just as the angel had stated. As they entered the stable the rude oxen were feeding by the manger; and there stood Joseph, a quiet,

harmless looking young man ; there was also a lovely woman, watching with intense interest over an infant that lay in the manger. When they lifted up the cloth that covered the infant, O what a lovely face they beheld ! Never had mortal eyes gazed on so lovely a face as that before." "Ah!" exclaimed Simeon, "born in Bethlehem, of the lineage of David—born of a virgin—and then, just at this time—the very place predicted by the prophet—the exact time foretold by Daniel—the exact fulfilment of the predictions of Isaiah—the circumstances all wonderfully agree ; and, then, the sceptre was not to have departed from Judah till the Messiah should appear. This is the Lord's Christ. I shall not see death till I have seen the Lord's Christ." Simeon said to himself, "They will bring him to the Temple to circumcise him." Away went Simeon, morning after morning, to see if he could get a glimpse of Jesus. Those who are seeking Jesus will be found waiting for him in the Temple ; 'tis there he is often found. He has said, "Where-soever two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It is a good thing to be found by the way. If the blind men had not been by the way-side, where the Saviour passed by, they might have remained blind for ever. Go to the Temple : the great Physician often passes by there, and heals the sin-sick souls. Perhaps unbelief suggested to Simeon, "You had better stop at home this wet morning ; you have been so many mornings and have not seen him, you may venture to be absent this once." "No," says the Spirit, "you must go to the Temple." Away went Simeon to the Temple. He would no doubt select a good post of observation. Look at him there, leaning his back against one of the pillars of the Temple ; how intently he watches the door ! He sees one mother after another bringing her infant to the Temple to be circumcised ; he surveys the face of every child. "No," says he, as his eye scans the countenance, "that is not he, and that is not ;" but at length he sees the Virgin appear, and the Spirit told him that that was the long-expected Saviour. He grasped the child in his arms, and pressed him to his heart, and exclaimed, "Now, Lord, lettest

thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Simeon had seen Jesus, and wished at once to pass away to the spirit world. The one grand object of Simeon was to see the Lord's Christ. Between Simeon and an awakened sinner there is one point of agreement: they both desire to see one object—the Lord's Christ. When a sinner is awakened, fully aroused to a sense of his danger, around his mind the lightning of divine truth flash; in the blaze of that light (as the clouds break that enveloped him) he sees a boundless immensity; before him a bleak untravelled eternity; above him, frowning upon him from a burning throne, a holy God. He sees himself sleeping on a precipice, on the crumbling edge of ruin, with vengeance pending ready to burst upon him, and flames roaring around; while beneath him, at his feet, roll the waves of a burning hell; within him, the stings of a guilty conscience. Hear him: "What must I do? Whither can I fly? Fly from God I cannot, nor from myself. Which way I fly is hell—myself am hell; a weight, like a tremendous mountain, presses me down; the very glooms of death envelope me. What must I do? I want help: to whom must I look?" Behold, a ray of light breaks in upon him—one single, but bright ray; it keeps him from utter despair, it gives him a faint hope, it enables him tremblingly to say, "Before I see death, I shall see the Lord's Christ."

1. Unbelief suggests, "How do you suppose that you will be permitted to see the Lord's Christ? Do you think the great Jehovah, whose majesty almost confounds the cherubim and seraphim—at least compels them to cover over their bright faces with their wings, and fall before his throne in deep adoration—whose temple is all space, whose arm is around all worlds, who inhabits eternity, at whose bidding the sun lights up his fire, whose empire is so vast that were an angel, with the lightning's swiftness, to fly in a direct line from the centre, he would not in millions of years sweep the outskirts of his creation, 'who sits upon the highest heavens, and sees worlds infinite dance *beneath him as atoms in the sunbeam*, you an atom, a shade,

a moth, a worm, a flower of the field to-day, and not to-morrow, in the morning, and not to-night, not master of a moment, not a match for a breeze, a dream, a vapour, a shadow,' a sinner born to die—how do you suppose he will show you the Lord's Christ?" Replies the awakened sinner, "One thing I know: I dare not die till I have seen the Lord's Christ. I cannot endure that horrid sting that gleams in his uplifted arm; I dare not face that grisly king of terrors in my sins; I cannot plunge into the future till my load of guilty woe is gone. Ah! 'tis the 'open book, the terrible judgment, the awful unknown horrors that lie concealed in the future—'tis those things I cannot endure: that death so terrible without Christ. 'Tis true I am insignificant—a shade, a blast, a worm; and, what is worse, a sinner. 'Tis true, God is great beyond even angelic conception; but he humbles himself to behold the things done in heaven and on earth. He balances the planets in their motions; yea, he tinges the wing of the little insect that buzzes for an hour in the sunbeam, and then yields up its existence; he paints with lovely hues the beautiful little flower that blooms in my path; and is it not written in his book that a sparrow does not fall to the ground without his notice—that he clothes the lily of the valley, and numbers the hairs of my head? Then the magnitude of his engagements does not overwhelm him, nor their multitude confound him. While he is balancing the motions of the planets, governing the armies of heaven, and superintending the vast universe, he can, at the same time, bend all that attention to me as fully as though I was the only object of his care. He made me, and, by some unseen, mysterious power, he bids my heart beat sixty times a minute, and my blood to course its way round my system; he upholds my soul in life. He cares, then, for my body: will he be less concerned about my soul? Will he arrange all nature to minister to my bodily wants, and leave my soul to perish? No; that is unlike him. Would he give his Bible to guide me, his Son to die for me, and his heaven for my eternal home, and then refuse to save me? No; I would rather believe that, were he creating

a new system like the solar system of which we form a part, and were a sinner to send up a cry for mercy, that, could he not attend to the two things at once, he would stop the work of creation till he had saved the sinner. He will not overlook me, he will not leave me to perish. Before I see death, I shall see the Lord's Christ."

2. Unbelief again suggests: "Are not your sins too great in magnitude and multitude to be forgiven? Had you repented years ago—had you sought mercy in your youthful days, when the Spirit of God strove with you, before you had sinned away your day of grace—you might have been forgiven; but now is not your day of grace for ever closed?" "I know my sins are many; I may as well try to number the hairs of my head, the sands of the ocean, or the stars of heaven, as number them; and as to their magnitude, when I consider the extent of the law I have broken, the circumstances under which they were perpetrated, the Being against whom they were committed; when I consider that conscience lifted up its warning voice, that the blessed Spirit wooed, and strove, and flashed his light across my soul to check me, that heaven closed up its doors to shut me out, that the holy God frowned upon me, that hell seemed moved from beneath to meet me, that the gospel put a torch in my hand, and led me up the hill of Calvary to look upon the torn, bleeding, dying Redeemer, and though he cast a look upon me of the softest pity, and all his wounds seemed to have tongues exclaiming, 'I suffered this for you,' yet I sinned on still; when I look at these things, I see my sins like mountains rising before me, the summits of which seem to scale the very heavens; their stains on my soul are black as hell; and there is one sin in particular that presses on me like a mountain weight—it seems to stand out as a master sin—it is the sin of trampling on the precious blood of Christ, rejecting for years the great atonement; his stamps my sin with a guilt that outvies the fiends of perdition.

"'But though my sins like mountains rise,
And swell and reach to heaven,
Mercy is above the skies—
I still may be forgiven.'"

Jesus died for me; not for himself, but for all, for me. Did not Isaiah seem to rush on over hundreds of years, and, as he walked around the cross, cry, with a burning heart, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed'? Did not Zechariah say, 'In that day there shall be a fountain opened in the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness'? Does not Paul say, 'How much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God'? And did not Jesus reiterate the united voice of inspiration when he said, on the cross, 'It is finished'? And when he, the Saviour, bowed his blessed head and died, did he not do all that was necessary, all that heaven required? Paul said it was for the whole world, and John said it was for all sin. If, then, he died for all men, he must have died for me; if for all sin, then he must have died for mine. Here's a great fact, then, to which I will cling as with a death grasp. Jesus died for my sins. All the infidels on earth, and all the devils in hell, cannot disprove this fact. It was for man he died. Well, I am one of that species; it was for the lost—I am lost; it was for sinners—I am a sinner. Then I may boldly sing:

" 'Who died for every sinner die
Hath surely died for me.' "

That is good logic." "But does the death of Christ reach my case?" It reached the case of a Manasseh, a Saul of Tarsus, a Magdalene, a dying thief. Oh! the blood, the precious blood of Christ—the blood of the great atonement. I fancy I see its influence girdling the world. It can reach the case of every sinner in every chapel; of every sinner in every hamlet, every town, every city, every nation, every continent; and, I had like to have said, if every one of those globes of light that gleam out upon us from the deep blue heavens were peopled with sinners, as numerous and guilty as the sinners of the planet on which we live, the blood of the great sacrifice is efficacious enough to

cleanse the whole from sin—enough to cleanse me. “Did he die for me? Then he will not reject me—he will not cast me off for ever. He has bid me look to him and be saved; then I shall not die till I have seen the Lord’s Christ.”

3. But unbelief again suggests, “Do you suppose that the sins of an age can be pardoned in a moment of time—sins that have spread over years of your life? Could you, by deeds of sacrifice, make some amends to heaven for the deep wrongs you have inflicted, could you repair the breach in the broken law, could you satisfy offended justice, make a rigid reformation, weep and groan out months and years to come, then you may hope to be forgiven.” “But,” replies the pleading penitent, with his tearful eye and anxious soul turned up towards the Saviour of sinners, “Ah! if that be true, if I am to wait years, ere those years shall have rolled round, my body may be slumbering in the cold grave, and my soul buried deep in the grave of a burning hell; but salvation is not of works. If it were, it would be a question of time. Eighteen hundred years ago, on the accursed tree, Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’ Then my sins were expiated, then the blessed Saviour heaved the load from this guilty world; and, besides, there is no hint in the Bible that I must stop for time. Does he not say, ‘Come, now, and let us reason together, and though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool; though red like crimson, they shall be whiter than snow’? Then, since Christ has finished the work—since the Bible never hints that I must stop longer—since salvation is by grace, not by works—since everything is done that can be done—I will dare believe; I will go as I am; I will look up to the bleeding Saviour; I will see him, or perish in the attempt; I will make my way to him step by step; and though it be through blood, fire, and death—yea, though all hell shall oppose my soul—I’ll fight my passage through. I am a sinner, and unless saved must soon sink into hell. I stand on one planet—one world—but death will soon push me off. And what will become of me? I see before me two worlds. One of them is *the burning planet of hell*, and my sins are like weights to sink

me down within the sphere of its gravitating influence. My soul is magnetized by sin, and on my sins its gravitating laws will act; and as I leave this planet it will attract me downwards toward the centre of that fearful region; and as I near it, those shadowy forms of lost fiends and damned men will rise up, and, with withering sarcasm, exclaim, 'Art thou also become as one of us?' What shall I do? I see also another planet girdled with a halo of light—light from another sun. I see there a throne blazing with majesty and glory; I see myriads of shades of light, moving like beams of light, circling that throne; I see on it the King of eternity—the God I have offended; but there is a rainbow girdling that throne, and written upon it in letters of light, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' This is the good news brought me from that world. It is written in a book. Lord! from that stupendous height, towards which the cherubim lifts up an eye in vain, bow down thine ear—show me thy Son. Thou giver, guider, lover, yea, buyer of souls, let not thine anger burn for ever; cast me not away; reclaim, not destroy me. Thou didst look compassion on a denying Peter, and did not reject disbelieving Thomas; thou didst gather to thyself in paradise (where angels cast their crowns at thy feet) a thief from the cross. What a wonderful climax is this! And is it possible for love to rise higher still? Oh! let it rise higher, and reach even me. Does not thy love, like a great ocean, overflow the whole creation? Then add to thy other wonders one wonder more, and save even *me*! Yes, thou wilt; thy word is pledged; I shall see *him*; these eyes shall feast on him; before the king of terrors shall strike the blow, I shall see the Lord's Christ. Then, let death hurl me from this planet, let hell send out its gravitating influence, let all the fiends of perdition throw their spell around me, a sight of Christ will save me! Here, then, I am shut up to the faith, like a man shut up in a castle. Break through the walls I cannot, to scale *its summit* I have no power; but Heaven has

opened a door! I see before me an open door—I look through it. Yonder is a mountain; and on that mountain I see rising, above a dense crowd of beings, the form of a cross. The sight wanes away into darkness—darkness at noon. How awful that darkness! I feel the planet on which I stand trembling in its orbit. How the earth quakes, heaves, and swells around me! Hark! the very rocks are rending asunder. How deafening those peals of thunder! Those flashes of lightning, how fearfully vivid! The storm rages on, the elements are all at war. Behold the lurid lightnings playing over the graveyard! Look! look! the very dead are rising from their tombs. Is the day of doom arrived?—are the elements returning to their chaotic state?—is the great white throne about to burst upon our view? No; I feel the trembling earth subsiding—those awful sounds are less loud—they grow fainter and fainter. Now all is quiet—quiet—how fearfully quiet! Surely the very winds are sleeping; surely neither man, nor angel, nor devil seem to breathe. The maddened cry—the blood cry—the death cry—the cry of *crucify him*, which rang so wildly around that summit a few minutes since, is now hushed. Oh, how oppressive this silence! 'tis like the silence of death. The death of winds, the death of ocean, the death of angels, the death of demons, the quiet of universal death. Hark! hark! a faint cry—it comes down on the moaning winds, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' and, 'It is finished!' See! see! a faint streak of light breaks—glimmers over the mountain. I see through the gloom the shadowy outline of a *cross*. I see a form—a human—writhing in agony on that cross. I see blood dripping over that brow—dripping from those hands and feet fastened by the nails! How full of compassion! That is the *Lord's Christ*! See! my soul, the pardon of all thy sins is written with pointed steel and streaming blood on his pierced hands and feet. He speaks to thee. His cross is the pulpit, his blood his eloquence, his death his subject. He speaks to thee: listen, O, listen to him! 'Believe, and thou hast everlasting life; believe, and a grain of faith will remove mountains of guilt; believe with all thy heart; all things are possible to him that believeth. Thou hast played with fiery serpents; they

have bitten thy heart, but I have already sucked the mortal poison. In the perilous attempt, my soul was seized with sorrow, even unto death; and an unheard-of agony, attended with a bloody sweat, came upon my body; a racking cross was the bed I was stretched upon; sharp thorns proved the pillow on which I rested my fainting head; the bitterest sarcasms were my consolations; vinegar and gall my cordials; a band of bloody soldiers the cruel wretches appointed to tear open my veins; whips, nails, a hammer, and a spear, the instruments allowed them to do the dreadful operation. For hours I bled under their merciless hands, and thy fearful curse, O sinner! flowed together with my blood. In the meantime, noonday light was turned into the gloom of night—a dire emblem of the darkness that overspread my agonizing soul—and at last, while earthquakes rocked me into the sleep of death, I gave up the ghost. And now, sinner, despise no more such amazing love; requite it with a believing look. By all that is near, and dear, and sacred to thee, fly from eternal death—fly for eternal life. The *law* pursues thee with ten thousand curses; the sword of divine vengeance flames over thy devoted head. Death levels his pointed spear at thy thoughtless or throbbing heart; hell itself is moved from beneath to meet thee at thy coming; and the *grave* gapes at thy feet, ready to close her hideous mouth upon thee. Fly, then, miserable sinner! If thy flesh is not brass, and thou canst not dwell with everlasting burnings, fly for shelter to my bloody cross! The Philistines are upon thee; instantly shake thyself; burst the bonds of spiritual sloth; break, like a desperate soul, out of the prison of unbelief; escape for thy life, look not behind thee, stay not in all the plain! This one thing do—leave Sodom and her ways behind, and press towards the little Zoar, and escape to the mount of God, lest thou be consumed. Dost thou at last yield? dost thou turn thy trembling heart and tearful eye towards me? ‘Yes,’ exclaims the penitent—

“‘I yield! I yield!

I can hold out no more;

I sink, by dying love compelled,

And own thee Conqueror.’

My one object now is to see thee. Yes; 'tis he! 'tis he!—my Lord that suffers there. Thou art my salvation! I will trust in thee, and not be afraid! I dare, I can, I do believe! Hallelujah! My Lord, and my God!" "Now, Lord, lettest thou, &c."

When we have seen Christ, the sting of death is gone. Simeon pressed the Lord's Christ to his heart, and then he never wished his eyes to gaze on aught more of earth; and when the believing penitent has Christ in his heart, the hope of glory, then he is not afraid of death. A fact will bear out this statement. Some time since, a minister of the gospel was called upon to visit a dying woman. He ascended a flight of stairs that led into a miserable-looking garret; for, though clean and neat, there was scarcely an article of furniture to give an air of comfort to the chamber of death. In one corner of the room there was a bed—a bed of straw! On it lay a dying female, pale, and worn to a skeleton; she was near the verge, the trembling verge, of eternity. The minister drew nigh and said to her, "Well, my friend, how do you feel? What are your prospects for the eternity which is just about to open upon you?" She looked up in the minister's face with a countenance bright with heavenly radiance, and beaming with a brightness she had caught gazing on the visions of God, and said, "Oh! sir,

"Tis Jesus, the first and the last,
Whose Spirit shall guide me safe home;
I'll praise him for all that is past,
And trust him for what is to come."

Christianity can make a bed of straw into a bed of down—can convert a gloomy sick chamber into the vestibule of heaven, a chamber where the soul unrobes and plumes herself for her flight.

ON PREACHING.

BY DR. JOHN HALL.

Outline of Lecture before Yale Divinity School.

"Preach the Word."—2 TIM. iv. 2.

1. *Preach the fundamental truths of the Word.*

THE Church's imperfect state had one manifestation in its subdivisions, and these subdivisions occasioned a magnifying of special truths, and often half truths, over fundamental truth. This was natural, for one always most liked what was of his own local interest; and the fact of being the minister of a denomination was challenge to give amply the reasons for ministering to that denomination. These specialities had their origin partly in the tendency of erratic men to attack special points, and in the counter tendency of the Church to special formulating on those points. This special stress gave occasion in turn for the self-same men to attack the Church for the narrow specialization which their own attitude had occasioned. Hence came the undue training of almost every congregation in some special truth, to the hurt of symmetry, and the eclipse of broader truth.

It was also to be noticed, that there was too often a singular facility among church members in letting go Christian faith, and this facility would seem to accord with that with which the Christian life glided into. Surely there was need of more thorough-going, preliminary experience—looseness as to which was the natural revulsion from the extreme exactions of earlier days. There was also need that "joining the church" should

be less thought of than the growth into the Christian life requisite thereto. If by this means the church rolls grew less rapidly, quality rather than quantity was, after all, the main thing. Nor was there one law for those out of Christ, and another for those in him, but one law for both. Thus Paul "agonized" to present his hearers "perfect." As to the first steps and the latter growth of the Christian life, there was surely need that the preacher should realize the force of *epi* in *epaggello*, and the wide reach of the *nous* to be addressed by Christ's ambassador. In short, there was need of a deeper and more specific teaching of New Testament fundamentals; not "come to Christ" alone, but law, sin, wrath, mercy, holiness—all the elements of the full-rounded Truth, and not shilly-shally appeals and dissertations.

But some one would object that preaching these fundamentals would preclude many invaluable themes. This objection must arise from shallow thinking. There was all the wealth of the Old Testament: the Pentateuch, with its intense interest; the Psalms, with their difficulties (which would vanish under the true historic spirit) and with their infinite treasures; the prophets, perhaps for greater service to the church in late generations, but invaluable—Daniel, for instance: and it all centred around the Christ, who has thus no narrow theme, but infinitely varied and profound. The very fact of mystic extremes in the early Church in interpreting the Old Testament was evidence of how much there was to be got from it under proper and sympathetic study.

As a part of a more thorough-going preaching, and a suggestion from the infinite richness of Scripture just hinted at, expository preaching should be more general. That kind of preaching, like extempore speaking, suffered from its counterfeits. Of the latter something would be said later, but as to expository preaching, by it was meant neither rambling paraphrases nor pious meditations out loud, after the manner of Scott's "Practical Observations;" nor subjective vagaries, like those of the Mystics; nor hypothetical deductions, like those of Matthew Henry, in which laziness precluded finding out just

what the text meant, but made a variety of assumptions, with the consequence of invalidating the inferences from the conditional nature of the assumptions. By expository preaching was meant prayerful and diligent study of God's Word in connected passages, rather than in fragments, with the aim of getting the full force through the use of grammar, dictionary, and other helps, and the presenting of the result in its unity. Thus, if the speaker wanted to preach on the right use of wealth by the essay method, he might speak from "Will a man rob God?" grouping about these words his best arguments. But by the other method he would be likely to take Acts v. 1—11, the account of the judgment on an Ananias and Sapphira, and drawing a parallel with the punishment of Acham, would show how at the beginning of two great eras of the church covetousness was by miracle punished; and would present the subject in its concrete form with such force that the passage ever after would be a sermon of itself to his hearers. There were two great arguments for this method of preaching: first, the quickening nature of God's Word when thus taken in its largeness; secondly, the fact that while the essay method, by depending on originality, soon drew men dry (three essays a week would make Lord Bacon reproduce himself), thus being one occasion of short pastorates and the loss of force thereby, expository preaching would afford its own material, and enrich constantly, rather than drain, the preacher. That kind of preaching was, indeed, the hardest kind to succeed in at first, but one soon so grew in God's Word that the task would become easy and delightful.

Something was now to be said concerning preparation for the general work of preaching.

First, then, there must be health, in order to have a hearty spirit—power that one might be heard—power to endure study and pastoral labour—the being always at home studying and receiving callers with open arms, and the being always abroad visiting one's people, and the being always ready to give forth masterly sermons, finished lectures, and, chiefly, remarks on all manner

of subjects with erudition. Charles Simeon, of Cambridge, used to tell his students to take good care of the third milestone out of Cambridge, to go round it every day to see that no one carried it off. Walking was apt to be less in inclement weather in England than here, but the thought involved was a true one : while no man could expect materially to alter his physical constitution, it might be conserved and strengthened, and chiefly by exercise, healthful food, enough and not too much, and breathing good air when one could ; for of a Sunday the worst part of very bad air would have to be breathed during exhausting labour, and no pity extended to one for that.

There was need, next, of a competent general education. A man might be good spiritually, and a masterly theologian, but if his orthography was original, and his grammar erratic, and his knowledge of history confined to the hither side of the Declaration of Independence, it would soon appear, and he would come to be called "a good creature," or, as in the old country, "a good body," which word "body" was expressive. This thing was especially necessary, because the preacher must be a counsellor on important matters of practical life, as education ; and because, nowadays, the multiplication of books and newspapers made everybody educated, and reverence did not keep the masses from thrusting a knife into things. The Protestant clergy must take a higher stand in this matter than the one-sided training of the Roman and Greek churches. Noble had been the Protestant clergy of the past in these regards. Yale College was established by a few clergymen, who brought their books together to found a college in the wilderness. The ministry of to-day must not fall behind those noble standards. It was striking that Christ, though all his early surroundings were lowly, never offended the highest true taste of his time, but, on the contrary, occasioned the query, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

Next was needed acquaintance with the old tongues ; and, though it might be heresy, the speaker would advocate less of Pagan classics, and more of Christian classics—Eusebius,

Tertullian, Chrysostom the golden-mouthed, and the rest. It was not alone that the heathen classics teemed with immoralities, but that they reflected faith in an exploded religion, from which the boy naturally began to wonder if, by and by, Christianity would not be repudiated and laughed at too, which wonderment, lasting through the most impressible years, hurt the forming man. But, beyond this, the preacher must be an exegete in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures. It needn't be called exegesis, but "opening the Word of God," or showing "the mind of the Spirit;" but, under one word or another, it must exist. The preacher must not be a mere echo of what some one else had told him, or had written for him in a book, but must go to the fountain heads and get original knowledge, and knowledge living from the very contact with the old tongues. By this means one would cease to be a mere logician, saying to the people of a Sunday, "These are the Lord's words; I am now about to show you by science and metaphysics that the Lord knew what he was about, and therefore was perfectly justified in speaking as he did." That was not the errand of the preacher, but to be a herald. Being the contrary bred doubt; being the latter presented truth in its own convincing power, and, as it went on step by step, proved truth as well. What the pulpit needed was the interpretation of "the mind of the Spirit," fairly, justly, honestly, appreciatively; and an honest man must hence see at a glance the value of such a book as Trench's Synonyms, or Winer's Grammar of the Greek Testament.

Theology should also be mastered as a science. Decrying theology was all the fashion, but it was decrying rather the exploration of extinct volcanoes, which was only profitable for naturalists. People in that decrying didn't hit real theology. When there could be satisfactory mensuration or astronomy without mathematics; or gold, iron, and steel, without knowledge of chemistry; the preacher might get on without theology. He must know the grand science as part of his bone and sinew; he must know it for *his own self-respect*, and for mastery of the

situation; he must know it that he might rightly teach the people—untechnically, however, as a real chemist would teach unlettered iron puddlers in plain terms and by experiments how to desulphurize iron. At certain times there were special departments of theology that should be especially studied—just now evidences, not necessarily to preach them much, but to help doubters, to silence superficial sceptics, for the very sake of honesty with one's self. In this country there was need just now to study Romanism. It was fast passing its era of weakness here. It could not be pooh-poohed, for it was the growth of a thousand years of the best minds of the world. It was no answer that it could never dominate America, for if it did not dominate, it could damage. It was ready still, as so often in the history of Europe, to hoist itself between even powers, and buy up and subsidize the one that would sell. Ten years would see more of an issue with it than was thought of yet—albeit politicians even now did their obeisance to it, for it was a politics as well as a religion.

Church history was also a most invaluable study to the preacher. By it the Church, in its historic grandeur, its growth, aspects, its mistakes, and its wisdom, its whole fund of experience, would become part of the preacher's self.

Then there was the old English Bible, happily in the revision not to be essentially altered in phraseology. Of pure, nervous, vigorous Saxon, which one ought always to speak, it was a masterly specimen of writing. In its words conclusions might be expressed, or sins rebuked, which, in one's own phrase, would be hurtfully plain. The very melody of its words was a benediction in many passages: "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you!" "Ye believe in God, believe in Me." Memorizing was one way to become familiar with the English Bible; but the best way was to use it devotionally so much as to make it a part of one's self. If lovers of good literature committed large parts of Cicero, Horace, Shakespeare, Tennyson, Longfellow, much more should the preacher the majestic Bible.

SOLOMON, THE BRILLIANT FAILURE.

BY REV. C. H. PAYNE, D.D.

"Solomon in all his glory."—MATTHEW vi. 29.

"Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord."—1 KINGS xi. 6.

LOOKING through the Portrait Gallery of the Scriptures, one cannot fail to observe the wonderful diversity of character therein portrayed. Here are heroes and martyrs, warriors and saints, statesmen and poets, characters lofty and lowly, strong and weak, secular and saintly. Yet this very diversity is evidence of the faithfulness of the portraiture. Had all the characters of the Bible shone with a divine radiance we should have questioned the truthfulness of the record. As it is, we see in them all evident touches of humanness. They represent humanity as it was in them and is in us. Therefore every Scripture character is rich in instructive lessons. Their weaknesses and folly, their strange contrasts and inconsistencies, teach us not less valuable lessons than their loftier and worthier traits.

The character of Solomon is unique—one of the loftiest and saddest of the Sacred Volume. Grand in its stately strength and towering height—sad in its demoralization and fall. A morning fair and bright as ever dawned on mortal vision—high noon golden and glowing, flashing its glories far and wide—an evening clouded and mournful, with wailing winds and muttering thunders. Is it not the type of many another life? Has

SOLOMON,

it not a voice of wisdom for us? Let us sit awhile before this portrait, study its features, apply its lessons, and grow stronger and wiser the while.

Let us first take a rapid glance at the historic outlines of Solomon's life. He was the latest born son of David and Bathsheba—"tender and only-beloved in the sight of his mother." Born a prince, the object of special parental affection, a beautiful and promising child, his education was doubtless the best that could be secured. Nathan, the prophet, was his special preceptor, but, unquestionably, the wisest teachers of Jerusalem were his instructors. Yet it is probable that his education amid courtly splendours developed intellectual activity and the poetic sentiment, rather than that robustness of character which marks many of the stalwart heroes of the Old Testament.

At the age of ten or eleven years he witnessed the revolt of his brother Absalom, after whose tragic death he was regarded as the heir to the throne. There was, however, another older brother, Adonijah, but David, who was greatly under the influence of Bathsheba, had secretly sworn to her that her favourite son, Solomon, should be king. David was now old and feeble, the throne would soon be vacant, and Adonijah plotted to seize it by a *coup d'état*. Absalom's revolt was reenacted with less success. Abiathar, the priest, and Joab, David's chief general and trusted friend, with many of the "king's servants," were in league with Adonijah. A speedy blow must be struck to save the throne to Solomon. Nathan and Bathsheba hastened to the feeble David, urged upon him his oath, and measures were at once taken to put the crown on Solomon's head. The young prince is placed on the royal mule, and with his supporters hastens to Gihon, where he is anointed king by Zadok, the younger chief priest. The loud trumpet blast peals out the announcement to the assembled concourse, who send back the shout, "Long live King Solomon." He is borne in triumph to the palace, seated on the royal throne, and receives the benediction of his father, David. The sudden *enthroning* of Solomon strikes dismay into the hearts of the

conspirators. Adonijah flees to the sacred altar on Gibeon for protection, and is spared only to perish without mercy a little later. Abiathar is deposed and disgraced, and Joab, the white-haired hero of a hundred battles, is slain by his former comrade, Benaiah, while yet his hands clasp the consecrated altar. Every enemy was now removed, and Solomon was "established," according to promise, on the throne of his father, David. He was at that time, probably, about nineteen or twenty years of age—a lofty position, and great responsibility, for such a youth. Let us see how he met the demands of the situation.

Among his first acts was one eminently religious—respecting the worship of the true God. The ancient Tabernacle stood on the heights of Gibeon, some six miles north-west of Jerusalem. Thither repaired the young Solomon on a sacred pilgrimage, attended by a vast retinue of dignitaries, and offered as a royal sacrifice a holocaust of a thousand victims to signalize his accession to the throne. Well is it to thus honour God and inaugurate every new and important era in life at the assumption of new duties—entering the marriage relation—by some special offering or act of consecration to the Father above. God was pleased with this evidence of Solomon's piety.

We now come to the most important act of his life—the great test of his character which affords evidence of his superior qualities. The night after his sacrificial offering God appeared to him, and the solemn voice said, "Ask what I shall give thee." What a moment of thrilling interest was that! A young, ambitious king in the very presence of Jehovah—a voice divine proffering him whatever gift his heart should crave—the hand omnipotent extended to supply his utmost wish. What visions of glory must have passed before his mind in that supreme moment of decision! What forms, beautiful and smiling, stood before him pointing out the gleaming path of promised good! But none of these forms of beauty or visions of golden Hope throw the spell of their fascination over his mind in that crisis hour. *He asks not Honour's fairest crown, nor Pleasure's most*

enchancing gifts, nor Fortune's amplest favours, nor life prolonged through ever fresh and happy years—but he does ask the transcendent gift of Wisdom. He recognizes the duties and responsibilities of his high position. He remembers the mercy of that God who has thus exalted him. He is conscious of his own weakness. What humility he exhibits! "I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people. Give thy servant an understanding heart" (1 Kings iii. 7.) Wisdom and an "understanding heart," qualifications for his station—character, and not any extraneous good, is the choice of this young man of rare endowments. And this view of himself and his greatest need is the more notable because of his age—at twenty or thereabouts—the very period when we are wont to be most presumptuous and self-confident; jealous of a greatness not yet assured to us; impatient of counsel, untractable, and swayed by passion and impulse. This remarkable choice of Solomon puts on him the stamp of nobility.

Throw now upon this scene the colour of reality by making it your own. Imagine yourself face to face with God while the same solemn voice lays upon your heart the decision of your destiny, saying: "Ask what I shall give *thee*." Would such a privilege prove a boon or a calamity? Would your choice lift you to companionship with the noblest sons of God, or sink you to fellowship with the basest slaves of earth? What am I saying? Such a decision is in fact laid upon the will of every one before me now. And the choice is being made. If it be not expressed in words, it is crystallized into acts.

As in fabled story two maidens came to Hercules while in his youth—the one, Pleasure, fair and winsome; the other, Virtue, modest and mild—and solicited his company through life, so now, young friends, there come to you the same forms—divine and human—and in your ear rings the voice of each, saying: "Follow me."

How was this choice of Solomon honoured by God? It *pleased him much that this youth had so wisely made the*

choice of wisdom, and he gave him that which he had asked, such wisdom as never before distinguished the mind of mortals; and because he had chosen this higher good, God added thereto the lesser gifts of riches, and honour, and length of days. Let it be remembered that the matchless wisdom Solomon henceforth exhibits is the special gift of God. And is this marvellous Fountain of understanding accessible to you, young men of lofty aspirations and hope? Does this same beneficent Being proffer you the gift divine and priceless? Aye, to you the Voice cries, "Ask, and it shall be given unto you." "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally." God looks with favour on a praying youth whose heart, distrustful of itself, cries in the Father's ear for help and guidance, and heaven drops its highest benisons on his path.

There is an Arabic legend that because Solomon, in one of his marches, stayed at the hour of prayer, instead of riding on with his horsemen, God gave him the winds as a chariot, and the birds flew over him as a perpetual canopy. Young man, if you will pause in the march of life to daily offer to God the prayer of a yearning, trusting heart, the winds of God shall be your chariot, the Providence of God your protecting canopy, the angels of God your ministering servants.

Let us now hastily follow this youthful king, with the crown of wisdom on his brow, through his brilliant reign. He returns to Jerusalem and commences a series of acts that extend his dominions and establish his kingdom on a scale and grandeur dazzling and unparalleled. He inaugurates a foreign policy before unknown. Alliances are formed with the kings of Egypt and Tyre. He creates a commerce, and in those early days—a thousand years before the coming of Christ—sends his ships ploughing through the Indian Ocean to the far off Ophir in the East, on the shores of India or Arabia. They came back freighted with gold and silver, fragrant woods and spices, ivory, and specimens of natural history. His empire stretches from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean, from the foot of Lebanon to the desert bordering on Egypt. At home peace and plenty

pour their amplest blessings over all the land. It is the golden age of Israel. Solomon adorns and beautifies Jerusalem, making it indeed "the joy of the whole earth."

The grandest of all his kingly acts was the building of the Temple—the wonder and admiration of the world. From the forest of Lebanon and the quarries of Bezetha came the materials. Seven and a half years was it in building, being completed in the eleventh year of his reign. This splendid edifice was dedicated with a magnificence which beggars description. It was the great occasion of Solomon's life, and he is the grand central figure in the scene. All Israel is present—heads of tribes, paternal chiefs, priests, Levites; but Solomon himself, invested with no priestly power, standing on a brazen platform erected in front of the altar, offers the dedicatory prayer containing some of the sublimest utterances that ever fell from human lips. The mysterious cloud of divine glory filled the sacred structure—the heavenly fire descended and consumed the sacrifice—God thus manifested his approving presence.

Jerusalem saw other grand structures rise under Solomon's hand. Among these was a palace for himself, which required eight years longer than the Temple to complete; another—perhaps enclosed within this—for his wife, the daughter of Pharaoh, the house of the forest of Lebanon; here he sat in his court of judgment, seated on a throne of ivory and gold, with six lions on either side, standing on the steps and supporting the arms of the chair. There were also ivory palaces and ivory towers, used for the king's armoury. Besides these he had a summer palace at Lebanon; he built pools of water, and costly aqueducts and stately gardens. Tadmor in the wilderness, now Palmyra, was built by him, whose massive ruins are the marvel of modern travellers.

The style of grandeur in which he lived almost surpassed credence. Forty thousand horses for his chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, were at his command. He rode in royal state, clad in snow-white raiment, in a magnificent chariot of cedar decked with silver and gold and purple, attended by a

body-guard of three score valiant men, tallest and most beautiful of Israel's sons, arrayed in Tyrian purple, their long black hair sprinkled with gold dust. His banquets were of corresponding splendour; all his plate and drinking vessels were of gold. Silver was so plenty "it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon." This, and much more that I might add, gives us a glimpse of the outward splendour of his reign.

But we have a juster view of his greatness when we recall his pre-eminent wisdom—the literary attainments and achievements which render him the prodigy of the ages. His knowledge of mechanics, as evinced in rearing those massive substructures of the Temple, which remain until this day, surpassed that of modern times. In natural history and science, botany, zoology, and kindred branches, he was the father and superior of all the moderns down to Professors Huxley and Tyndal. He spoke of trees, from the spreading cedar tree of Lebanon to the slender caper-plant that springs out of the crevice of the wall. He spoke also of "beasts and of fowls, of creeping things and of fishes." He rises also from the details of the naturalist and scientist to the broad principles of the philosopher, and the lofty heights of the poet. Three thousand proverbs, a thousand and five songs, were the literary children of his fruitful brain. Much of the highest wisdom of the Sacred Book—the divinest council to guide the erring feet of men in all ages—flowed from his inspired pen. The Proverbs of Solomon, preserved in the Inspired Volume, are the surest guide for the young man of our age to follow. The voice of his wisdom cries to-day in the streets and places of concourse of this great city, in the case of every young man, saying: "Incline thine heart unto me; hear, and thy soul shall live."

But we must hasten to view this favoured child of wisdom and heir of fortune in another and sadder light. Can a character of such colossal proportions crumble and decay? Can wisdom so transcendent degenerate to folly? Can a heart in which are the principles of righteousness and truth become the home of sin and base desire? Behold the possibilities of human nature,

heavenward and earthward, in the towering heights and degrading depths to which the character of Solomon rises and sinks! His decline forms one of the saddest pages in the annals of history. This same man that built the Temple of Jehovah and consecrated it with his solemn prayer, and worshipped to divine acceptance the true God, also built on the southern heights of sacred Olivet sanctuaries to three heathen deities: Astarte, the goddess of Phenicia; Chemosh, the war god of Moab; and Moleck, god of Ammon. The rites with which these deities were worshipped were too cruel and licentious for detail.

Not only is his character tarnished by the permission of idolatry, but the foul sin of polygamy in its most aggravated form stained the purity of his life. This was not a new feature in the life of many heroic characters of Old Testament history; but Solomon carried it to an extent before unparalleled. He first married the Egyptian princess, Naamah, in his youth; afterward were added a vast number of inferior wives and concubines, all of them probably of foreign extraction, forming a harem of oriental beauty and splendour.

All of this was in direct opposition to the spirit and precepts of the divine law. His treasures, chariots, and wives were expressly prohibited in the Book of the Law. Concerning the king to be set over Israel, it is said: "He shall not multiply horses to himself, neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away, neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold."

Let no one claim that Solomon had the approbation of God in these his misdeeds. It is true that he lived in an age when the education and morals of men were far below their present standard, and some things were permitted by God by reason of their demoralized condition. It is, nevertheless, true that God never gave the seal of his approval to polygamy, or any of the sins that disfigure the character of Scripture history. Let me not involve the Holy God in the terrible sin of Solomon, nor excuse it because of his superior qualities, nor plead it in *extenuation* of our own misdoings. Rather let us seek to know

the hidden cause of his fall, and tremble as we see how insecure are the foundations that lie beneath the fair-seeming structure of our own character.

What, then, were the causes that produced this mournful decline, and overhung with darkest clouds the closing years of a life beginning with such high promise? And we approach this question with the more eager interest because the principles upon which character is built, and the influence effecting its demoralization, are generically the same in all ages. Men are rotting inwardly to-day, and the pillars of their character crumbling to decay from the very same influence that wrought the ruin of Solomon. Moreover, this fact of the decline and fall of character once lofty and apparently strong is but the commonest occurrence in modern society. We do well to study its insidious causes.

First, then, the superior endowments of Solomon became a snare to him, as they are liable to prove to every gifted nature. Great talents involve great liabilities. Every being is subject to eternal laws, which cannot be violated with impunity; God secures no man from the legitimate fruits of their violation. One of these laws is that which requires the improvement of talent as a necessary condition of increasing or even retaining it. When God gave Solomon that priceless largess of wisdom, he did not exempt him from this law, nor take the work of preserving his character and insuring his ultimate well-being into his own hands. It is a fatal delusion that there is a mysterious gift of God called grace which allows a man to sleep on the lap of some fair Delilah without being shorn of the locks of his strength—a magic power that holds a man to the right against his own deliberate choice. No; Solomon, divinely endowed, is yet arbiter of his own destiny, and on him rests the weighty responsibility of the inexorable law, “To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.” He failed to rightly employ the heavenly gift, and, failing, lost the precious boon. And to you, my friend, comes the warning voice of his sad fall. You are highly gifted of God and favoured among men, you who wear the crown of genius, or wisdom, or brilliant talent—you

who are endowed with cultured minds and learning's amplest stores—you young men of the schools and universities of our favoured land—you who stand on sunny heights of honour—you to whom God has entrusted the dangerous talent of wealth—you who are exalted to lofty summits of Christian privilege and grace—remember that with these superior gifts come corresponding responsibility and danger, and beware lest, like Solomon, you fall from the dizzy heights of favour to the darkest depths of shame.

Another cause wrought with insidious influence to effect his overthrow. Solomon was the dupe of that prince of deceptive devils, misnamed policy or expediency. It was from motives of policy, doubtless, that he entered into alliance with Egypt's king; it was from motives of policy that he married the daughter of that king, and took to his bosom his first heathen wife. Did ever man or woman marry from policy—political, financial, social interest—that in the end did not find it the most miserable policy ever mortal pursued, yielding its bitter fruits of sorrow and sin? There is but one bond that can ever bind two human hearts together in union strong and holy enough for the marriage relation, and that golden bond is *Love*—true, pure, uncalculating, heaven-born love. It was policy at first unquestionably that built heathen sanctuaries and encouraged idolatrous worship—that he might gain the favour of foreigners, and show a generous latitude becoming a liberal-minded prince; for we cannot suppose that Solomon erected such idol-temples for his own worship. The argument was specious, as it always is—the influence insinuating—the result fatal. So men to-day adopt measures, conform with customs, form associations, contract marriages, enter into business engagements, impelled by some plausible motive of expediency, forgetting the eternal standard of right, and the law that knows no exemption: “Whatsoever a man sow, that shall he also reap.” The darkening clouds that gather round the head of Solomon—the sins and woes that curse his later years—may well teach us to beware of the *policy that leads to dangerous alliances and sinful associations.*

In estimating the causes of Solomon's decline we must also remember the danger that always attends great worldly prosperity. Human nature is too weak to bear unharmed great elevation. Dazzled and blinded by the splendour of rank and honour, and power and wealth, man reels and falls from the giddy height. Does it surprise you that one of such a lofty nature and high endowments as Solomon should be bedazzled by the brilliancy of any earthly light, and fall from such a height to sins of such enormity as we have specified? Look into your own heart and the problem is solved. To how slight an eminence can you be lifted without becoming giddy? Let but one title be added to your name—one simple green wreath of honour put upon your brow—a trivial office—a few thousands swell your purse—a house larger and costlier than your neighbour's be yours—an equipage more dashing—a little more learning—a higher social status—a costlier ring upon your finger even—a richer fabric on your person—and how likely is it to affect your spirit and bearing? Ah, how little does it take of earth's coveted goods to make us forget the corruption within us—the grave that awaits us, the God that made us, the heaven that invites us! Let us be warned of this danger in time, and remember that it was this same Solomon who said, "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them." And he, wisest of men, illustrated the truth of his own proverb.

But Solomon fell finally and chiefly a willing victim to the seductive charms of pleasure and carnal indulgence. One sentence of the Inspired Volume reveals to us the fatal cause: "Solomon loved many strange women, and they turned away his heart from the Lord." Of all the insidious, corrupting, dangerous influences that ever wrought the ruin of man, the influence of a bad woman is the most fatal and irremediable. "She hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death." Let the fall of Solomon and David and Samson, and many another stronger than yourself, warn you, young man, *against* sinking into the voluptuous arms

of enchanted pleasure, pierced through and through with the poisoned dart of death.

How replete with lessons is the life of this son of fortune—lessons for every one to ponder with serious mind. How powerless are reason and learning to preserve character in the light of such a history as this? How weak is human nature in its best and strongest estate? Who can trust his own heart when such as Solomon fall? Can you, young man? Are you stronger, safer than he, leaning on that broken staff? Who can hope to fill the full measure of his ambition with the good or gain of this world with this history before him, and such sad wailings sounding in his ear, as come from the heart of the preacher in the Book of Ecclesiastes? Ah! those confessions of the preacher—let them be pondered. Solomon and all the glory of his forty years' brilliant reign have departed; but these remain to be read by the generations of men.

Let us learn to beware of the beginnings of sin. Not suddenly did this mighty prince fall. The Arabian traditions relate that in the staff on which he leaned there was a worm which was secretly gnawing it asunder. The legend is an apt emblem of the truth. Early in his youth that worm began to eat away the strength of that staff. For years, doubtless, his religious ideal was far above his actual life—the life full of strange inconsistencies and contrarieties—as in the life of many a man—now saintly, and now beastly; now praying, and now locked fast in the embrace of sin. Young man, take care that no worm secretly gnaw at the staff of support on which you lean.

What of Solomon's final state—saved or lost? The good God only knows. In the series of frescoes on the walls of the Campo Santo, at Pisa, he is represented in the resurrection as looking ambiguously to the right and to the left, not knowing on which side his lot will be cast. If he wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes, as it is probable he did, he saw at least the folly of his sins.

Let us listen to the deep-toned voice of warning that comes to us from his inspired wisdom, sadly illustrated by his uninspired life—"Fear God, and keep his commandments."

TEACHING OF CLOCKS.

BY REV. THOS. KELLY.

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."—1 Cor. xii. 4.

I WAS very much entertained not long ago, as I happened to go into a clockmaker's establishment in Montreal. There was all manner of clocks, from the slow-moving, stately-looking regulator, down to the little fussy clock not longer than your hand. It was about twelve o'clock in the day, and such a din of striking I never heard before. Every clock, when it got ready, made all the noise it could, but each in its own way. "There were diversities of operations, but the same spirit." They all had one object, and that was to tell everybody that it was twelve o'clock. It was amusing to see meagre little clocks, that you could almost put in your pocket, start up and tip off the whole before larger, and, no doubt, more valuable ones got more than nicely begun, and then glance across as much as to say, "Mercy sake, do hurry up! If you want to learn how to strike, just take a few lessons from me." But it was only my imagination that gave birth to this reprimand. They all minded their own business; each did its own work in its own way, and according to its own prompting. If they had commenced to argue about their different style of working, their reasoning would not have been very edifying, or flattering to their maker, who was behind the counter, and it could not have interested me. About the only effect of the quarrel would have been that they lost time by it. Doubtless, every one of those clocks is sold before this. Each had its admirers. Some would fancy the large, costly-looking, solemn-toned clocks, and others would choose the more rapid, noisy, fussy little ones.

I learn from this that it is the duty of every man to be busy at his great life-work; that he should work naturally in his

own way, and find no fault with others who may have different ways of doing the same thing; and also that the style of doing work is a secondary thing: the amount of work done is the all-important question. It is the time kept, and told off faithfully. All depends upon that. I noticed a very fine-looking clock in front of me, and I said to the man, "This clock has taken no part in the noise, I believe?" He said, "No, it don't strike." I said, "Why?" "Well, it is not made to strike." I said, "How does it tell the time?" He said, "You must look at it, if you want to know." I learn from this that we have Christians among us who don't strike. I used to think that every person who enjoys religion must chime it off very distinctly on the bell of public profession. I believe still, that almost all true Christians are made to strike, and when wound up on both sides they will strike. But now and then you find one who appears to lack the striking weight, or the bell, I don't know which. They don't tell the time to the ear, but if you look at the dial of their conduct and conversation you will find it unvarying as the sun. It is a great blessing that we have so many true Christians, who, amid the dense darkness that surrounds them, fearlessly publish to the world the true time of day. I have often laid awake in the dark with the query in my mind, I wonder what time it is?—when suddenly the faithful clock struck off the answer.

Many around us, whom we least suspect, are in a state of wakefulness and unrest; they have either lost the time, or never had it. They are dissatisfied and unhappy, and would gladly find the way to a better life. Oh, that as Christians, we were more faithful to

"Tell to all around,
What a dear Saviour we have found;
And point to his redeeming blood,
And say, Behold the way to God."

I noticed another fine-looking clock that was going through all the motions of striking, but it only made a sort of buzzing noise, without making anybody the wiser as to the secret it

proposed to tell. I said to the gentleman, "What makes it act so?" He said, "The hammer has sprung a little, and comes down just beside the bell, but does not hit it." I thought, here is an illustration of many good sort of people in the church. They go through all the movements of striking, or bearing witness for Christ, but nobody is anything the wiser. The hammer strikes the bell, and strong, on any other theme but personal religion; there it has no emphasis or distinction of sound. This, I am convinced, is in many instances only a habit, and not the result of spiritual barrenness. It would be well if our good brothers and sisters who speak in this way would just press the finger of their will against the hammer, then push it gently over till it strikes distinctly and sounds B natural.

I saw another clock that appeared to like to hear itself strike. It struck; and struck, until I actually got nervous. I thought, here is an illustration of the fact that we have some in our churches who are great at striking. When they commence to pray, or speak, they never stop till they get through, and they never get through until everybody is nervous, and wishing them to stop. They always skip over the stopping places, and go on. That clock that worried me so only wanted the bending of a little wire about the eighth of an inch to put it right on striking. So those great strikers in the church only want a kind suggestion, or a little bend in the wire, and are all right. Sometimes, however, when very highly tempered, I have known the wire to break, and then there was striking with a vengeance, but in a different tone and spirit. My advice is, to any brother whose meetings are being made dry and spiritless by long talkers, have less striking by all means. Bend the wire, even though it should break. Better one be hurt than many. I have known some of these great strikers to be the very poorest of time keepers. I have heard them strike off in distinct tones twelve o'clock; "spiritual noon-day here," when the dial of their conduct and conversation scarcely indicated spiritual sunrise. If, as a church, we would have our social

means of grace throbbing with potency and life, we must do away as much as possible with all irrelevant striking, and be looking earnestly after the time, and telling it off to others, so far as we have been able to reach it.

I saw another clock that was not trying to keep time; it was standing still. I said, "Is this clock out of repair?" "No." "It wants to be wound up, I suppose?" "No, I cleaned, and regulated, and wound it up yesterday." "Why does it not keep time like the others?" "Well, just as I was winding it up, I was called away by a customer, and forgot to start it." I learn from this that we have those amongst us who need starting. There are many deeply anxious souls about us, who only want to be started. God has had his hand upon them. He has to wind them up, and put the weight of their sins upon them, and they only want the encouraging word, or the gentle touch of sympathy, to start them in the ways of God. And in the church men want to be started sometimes. There are many men who would pray in prayer-meeting if they got once started; many would give liberally to the cause of God if they once started, although I am aware that some men will start all over but at their pockets. Many a poor backslider is longing to be what he once was, but he wants the cheering word of hope and the gentle tone of sympathy to start him. A great want of the church to-day is a larger number of Holy Ghost men and women to be touching up the waning pendulums, and starting the still ones—not in an ostentatious spirit, or placarding their mission at every street corner, but in an unpretending, humble, almost unintentional way. Spirit of the heavens! help the unworthy servant this morning, that I may succeed in stimulating the weary, and starting some pendulums that are still. We all need the gentle touch of each other's sympathy. I need it as well as you. It puts fresh vigour into us often, when we see the strength and ease with which others are doing their work. As ministers it does us good to hear each other striking, and notice the swing of each other's pendulum. I have often gone to camp meeting and other places where I have heard ministers

preach with a pathos and a power which made me ashamed of myself. But I have reason to thank God for those ministers, and for those feelings of conscious inferiority; for they have given me to see how a *live* man can and will take hold of his work; and I have always found my own pendulum almost unconsciously swinging with greater emphasis and vigour after I got home.

I noticed another clock just in the act of stopping. I said, "Here is a clock just stopping; I presume it's run down?" He said, "No, it's not run down, but there is something under it; it's not plumb." I see in this tarved clock a symbol of many church members; there is something between them and God; they are not plumb. Oh! many professing Christians are swayed to one side or the other by things that are inconsistent with the Christian character. There are men in our churches who are toned all to one side by their taste for intoxicating drink, and others by their love of gain, and others by their love of pleasure, and others by their thirst for popularity or office. My dear brother, don't allow yourself to imagine that you can enjoy the religion of Christ, and at the same time "regard iniquity in your heart." If you wedge yourself off the perpendicular, or allow the devil to do it, or remain in that position, don't dream that you are still keeping time; you are either stopped or stopping.

I noticed one feature which all these clocks had in common, and that was, they all had a tendency to run down. Stimulus not found in themselves, but coming from an eternal source, had to be obtained; or they would soon tick themselves into silence. They all needed winding up. So there is a tendency in all Christians to run down. No man is free from it. I may preach to you from this awful place every Sabbath with acceptability, and be all the time running down. You may be as punctual as usual in your attendance at church, and as exemplary as usual in your deportment, and be all the time running down. The pendulum of profession may continue to wag when there is no honest time kept, and struck off, true to the occasion and to the hour. *This is the calamity and sin of the church to-day.*

Thousands of professing Christians have forgotten to go to God to be wound up, and cleansed, and regulated, and set to the true time. If you question some of them, they frankly tell you they don't profess to have the true time exactly; and those of them who do profess to have it are either deceiving, or being deceived; for while the bell of profession rings out progress, the hands on the dial of their conduct and consideration are either in the old place, or, like the shadow on the dial of Ahaz, carried backward several degrees. Our churches are cursed with those eight-day Christians who never think of being wound up till they go to church on Sundays, and the trouble is they never think of it then.

Some clocks can go for months without being wound up, and keep good time; but I never knew a Christian that could do it, and I know scores who have given it a fair trial. Yes, my dear Christian friends, we *must* be wound up, or we shall run down to the silence of spiritual and eternal death; and many will be led astray and ruined by our reckoning. The church has all the means and appliances in her hands to-day that are necessary to secure the conquest of the whole world for Christ, before the last hour of the year 1899 will have struck; but the trouble is, not in going order. She is at too great a distance from God; she has been trying to regulate herself, and she has lost time. If the whole Catholic Church were to yield itself up to God, to be wound up, and cleansed, and regulated, and set to the true time, the effect upon this sin-cursed world would be simply marvellous. There would be such a Niagara of benevolence, and heroic Christian effort, and Holy Ghost power launched simultaneously upon the nations, as would enable the church to measure her conquests by degrees of latitude and longitude, and not, as now, by isolated points and individual conquests. May the spirit of the Almighty give locomotive velocity to the delayed chariot wheels that shall usher in that glorious day.

THE EVENTS OF PALM SUNDAY.

BY REV. DR. ARMITAGE.

"Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass."—MATTHEW xxi. 5.

PERHAPS I ought to say, in the very beginning of these discourses, that it would neither be possible nor profitable to give you all the processes by which the correlative order of those events which characterize the great week is determined. In some cases there is perplexity in getting at their exact place in the narrative, and after the fullest investigation there will still be honest differences of opinion as to the precise mechanical position in which the acts and sayings of our Lord should be arranged to be exactly as they transpired. But, notwithstanding this, it will be satisfactory to know that there is really no diversity about the order of the leading transactions, while some may exist about one minor part fitting precisely into every minor part. The week which closes the forty days commonly known as Lent is called by the Greek and Latin Churches "The Greater Week," or "Holy Week;" the Germans call it "Charwoche," or the "Week of Sorrows;" while many Protestants denominate it Passion Week, meaning the week of our Redeemer's sufferings. These various names are intended to indicate the character which makes the events of these few days the greatest in the annals of the world, because they combine the majesty

and grief, the consecration and triumph, of Jesus in his mysterious redeeming acts. The first day of this week is called Palm Sunday, in commemoration of the fact that when Jesus entered Jerusalem on that day the Jewish population strewed the highway in which he rode with branches plucked from the palm, olive, and other trees. From an early day Christians in the East have practised the ceremony of carrying branches of these trees in solemn procession, in commemoration of our Lord's triumphal entry preparatory to his crucifixion in the Holy City.

According to Christian chronology, Jesus died in the thirty-third year from his birth, which, by Jewish time, would be in the year 4746. But as they did not reckon their time with astronomical exactness, but by the appearance of the new moon, it is not an easy matter to determine the precise day of our Lord's death. On the 14th day of the month Nisan the Jews celebrated their Passover, but as the 14th was determined by the fulling of the moon, the time of the Passover varied with that event, so that we cannot speak of the day of Christ's death with the accuracy of a calendar, as we can of the day on which Washington or any other historical person of later times died. The month Nisan answered to parts of our months of March and April, and Palm Sunday is supposed to have fallen on the 10th day of the month Nisan, which would be, say, April 2 in our calendar, or about that date. God has concealed from us the exact day of Christ's death for much the same reason that led him to hide the body of Moses from the Israelites, lest we should be tempted to worship the day, instead of him who redeemed us, during its hours. Hence the time of Christ's death is celebrated on days movable all the way from March 21 to April 22, nearly a calendar month of our time in variation. What is called Good Friday occurs this year on March 26, a somewhat unusual thing, which will not occur again till the year 1880. In the last week of our Lord's life scarcely an hour struck without announcing some great mediatorial circumstance, so that the seven days literally teem with events of the first moment. His sayings and doings fill a large space in the four

Gospels. They occupy about one-third of the Evangelist Matthew's Gospel, more than a third in Mark's, about one-fifth of Luke's Gospel, and nearly half of John's, so that fully one-fourth of all that is recorded of Christ's three years of ministry is crowded into the record of its last week. That we may understand perfectly the succession of events in each day of this week, we must bear in mind that the Jewish day of twenty-four hours was reckoned from sunset to sunset. What we call Palm Sunday began, therefore, at sunset on Saturday evening, when the Jewish Sabbath closed, and continued until sundown on Sunday evening. It is clear from the Evangelist John that Jesus spent his last Sabbath at Bethany, that he remained there on what would be our Saturday night, and began his triumphal journey to Jerusalem on the morning of the first day of the week, which would answer to our Sunday morning. Now let us look at the wonderful chain of events which mark the hours of Palm Sunday, as they are recorded by the Evangelists. Truly it is an assuring thought that, while many of our Lord's words and acts are recorded by only one or two of the sacred penmen, when we come to those sufferings in which all mankind are interested, all the Evangelists unite in the history. Their accounts are given in Matthew xxi. 1-17; Mark xi. 1-11; Luke xix. 29-44; and John xii. 12-19.

Read the passage at your leisure; then come and join the princely procession. After the repose of the Jewish Sabbath our Lord left the little secluded and wooded vale of Bethany on his journey to Jerusalem, a distance of about two English miles. We are not told at what hour he left this sacred hamlet, but it seems to have been early in the morning of Sunday, the first day of the week. It appears also that he set out on foot, as if he would enter the metropolis in humblest guise, in the midst of a throng of wayfaring men. In this simple manner he passed through the umbrageous valley of the "house of dates," as the name Bethany signifies. He moved on the rougher mountain track toward Bethphage, the "house of figs," a village lying south of Bethany, and near to it. And when he had reached

that part of the way which passes the ridge of the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples to the village over against him, with instructions to bring to him the colt of an ass. The owner of the beast consented, as if a king had made a draft upon him, probably being friendly to Jesus, and the animal was brought. This foal had never before carried a human burden. And after his disciples had covered the beast with their own garments, as a royal saddle, they raised their Master to his back, and the procession was ready to start. We are not to look upon this animal through modern and Western eyes, as mean and degrading to our Lord in its use, for in the East the ass was commonly ridden on great state occasions in preference to the horse. This rank of high honour was extended only to great statesmen, prime ministers, emperors, kings, and other persons of distinguished rank. On these occasions the beast which they rode was generally caparisoned in the most costly fabrics, while the waving of branches from the palm, the olive, the laurel, and other trees went before them, or these were spread on the ground, together with flowers and perfumes, mantles of silk and robes of other rich texture, forming a carpet of state on which the honoured persons might ride. The startling news had spread in all directions that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, so that great excitement filled the city and its suburbs, especially amongst the strangers, who had come in crowds from all parts of the world to attend the feast of the Passover.

Tens of thousands of these people had never seen the "Prophet of Galilee," nor had they ever seen a man who had been raised from the dead. They were eager to fasten their eyes upon a living being who had been in his grave four days, upon the sepulchral cave whence he had come forth, and upon the wonder-worker who had restored him to life at a word. Many of them were ignorant of the intrigues of the hierarchy, and unbiassed by its passions. Hence if they came out to see Jesus with enthusiasm, they came with favourable dispositions toward him. With the masses, the stream set only one way; *namely*, toward an independent monarchy, and only one spark

was wanted to kindle a revolutionary flame. Add to this the fact that the great court of Sanhedrim had openly resolved upon his destruction, and had given notice of his arrest; so that the machinations of his foes, as well as the enthusiasm of his friends, increased the popular sensation, and indicated that both felt that he had reached a crisis in his career. One part of the populace determined that he should perish, and the other that he should reign. This fevered condition of the public mind created two great bodies of men, who went forth to join him, one from the gates of the city to meet him, and one from all the suburban villages, who accompanied him from Bethany and joined him on the way. The general feeling ran high in his favour, as the confluence came pouring in from all quarters, the heart of the multitudes being either stirred by terrible forebodings, or struck by visions of glory in the secret hope that the long-promised Messiah had really come at last. The people were intent upon a politico-redemption. Every man in the throng hated the Roman yoke, and in his heart of hearts hoped that this wondrous being had sprung up to be the national deliverer, who might perchance on that very day seat himself upon the throne of David, in the city of the Great King.

But our Lord cherished no such plans. All through his life he had persistently refused to be treated as a king. He had even fled to a mountain and hidden himself when the people wished to proclaim him king. And see now, so far from being dazzled by earthly ambition, while the masses rend the air with their wild joys, the heart of the lowly traveller is grappling with an utterance of ancient prophecy. Five hundred years before this Zachariah had depicted the Shiloh passing the gates of Jerusalem in all the meek symbols of regal honour, and Jesus was mingling the significancy of the prophetic words which had laid slumbering in the past. This mysterious meaning had never been evoked until the colt, "whereon never man sat," was seen plodding its way up the slopes of Olivet. But Jesus put one construction upon these words of prediction, while the people put another. They hurried onward, leaping with

alacrity to the thought of making the great city the scene of temporal honours, grandeur, and pomp. His boundless charity had chosen it as the theatre of his bloody passion. This was not his ordinary way of entering the city at the Paschal festivity, and while they supposed the lowly beast was bearing him to a throne, he knew that every step brought him nearer to a cross. So the enraptured throng determined that he should enter the holy city as a monarch, and at once stripped the trees of the field and their own shoulders to cover the highway with offerings and adornments; and then, as by one impulse and instinct, they burst forth into one of the hymns from their sacred psalter, making hill and vale echo with the festive chant, "Hosanna! Blessed be the King that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!" And Jesus, on the eve of his sufferings, yielded to accept their outward solemnities of pomp, while their patriotic inspirations lifted them out of themselves, and floated in the perfumed breezes, to rival the songs of sanctity which filled the Temple itself with Paschal raptures.

Stop and wonder at his kingly tears. The road from Bethany to Jerusalem turns abruptly after leaving the shaded valley, and gradually ascends the Mount of Olives. As it approaches the top the horizon opens and the prospect widens into a soul-inspiring panorama of sacred things and places, in which mercies and judgments, relations and wonders innumerable, had become historical. That compass of vision clusters group after group of sacred relics, which fell under the eye of our Lord at a glance. The deep valley of Jehoshaphat opens fully to view, with the brook Kedron flowing through it, while Mount Moriah rears its head crowned with the glorious Temple. The chasm deepens all about it, the spiritual city living on one side of the dividing valley, and the political city on the other, and the stately architecture of the whole metropolis defining its lines on the blue firmament above it, or the dark hearts of the mountains round about Jerusalem. What a lovely exterior the great capital assumed to his eye as it lay in all its extent and magnificence! Ten thousand hallowed

memories stirred his heart as that morning's sun flooded pillar and pinnacle and dome in the national house of prayer, making its marble and burnished gold glow in its lustre. And what moved him more deeply still was the stream of pilgrims who came journeying in at that very moment from every point of the compass to celebrate the Passover, so that all the region round about was in motion. Devout Jews from all nations under heaven were flocking to the feast. When we consider that little, if any, less than 3,000,000 of people assembled on this occasion, we see at once that the city could not contain them, so that all the open lands in its vicinity would be covered with tents and booths for their shelter during the festal week.

This wonderful sight, breaking suddenly upon the Nazarene, touched him with compassion for his country and countrymen. He penetrated and laid bare all this momentary glory at a glance, and discovered the guilt, the blindness, and the rebellion of the queenly city. Hence his feelings struggled for utterance until his heart overflowed; compassion shook his spirit until he could refrain no longer, and tears gushed from his eyes, sparkling like diamond gems upon the costly robes and emerald leaves at his feet. Oh, what a picture is this of the Son of David in tears! Is this the appeal to the political passion of the people with which one of his foes charges him? Is this the worldly prudence of an adventurer? All signs of pomp and triumph depart. Everything here must be the sublime simplicity of purity and truth. At the tomb of Lazarus he wept privately; before the wall of the doomed city he sobbed publicly. Not a tear filled his eyes as he passed Gethsemane, but one look at Jerusalem broke his heart. The multitude are beside themselves with patriotism, huzzaing for the "King of Israel," while melting compassion rolls down his cheeks in floods. Only a few paces backward he had called up a slumbering prediction from antiquity for the ratification of his acts, and now he launches a wail of heart-breaking prediction into the bosom of the future. The cup of that city's iniquity was full, therefore it was reprobate and doomed, and at one breath

he coupled the past with the future, saying, "If thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Before the days of Jesus, God had given up Jerusalem again and again to slaughter. Once it was faithful, and then it became stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, and when the purest lips rebuked its profligacy in vain, so that Jehovah put it to the sword, it had died of falsehood, and been buried in ashes, and the heathen had shaken its dust from their feet, while only a few faithful ones wasted their tears on its ruins. With a terrible, stern reality, he predicted for it, as he wept, a future of wars, intestine and foreign, religious and civil; he read for it chapter after chapter of famine, pestilence, fire, treason, revenge, assassination, cannibalism, and blasphemy without parallel in history, sacred or profane. Can you wonder that he wept when he foresaw Titus marshalling a larger host against it than all the hosts of Israel could repel with standard and sword? Through his prophetic tears he foresaw the Temple of God reduced to dust and buried in slaughter and desolation. The crowds hail him as King, while he weeps over their kingdom departed. They welcome him as a deliverer, but under their very walls he tells them that their Holy City is lost.

Now witness his royal entry and bounty. It is said that when he entered the gates, "all the city was moved." Crowds marched before him, and pressed behind him. All was inquiry, amazement, commotion. The multitude forgot that their Temple was to be burned, that their streets were to flow with human blood, that their trenches were to be choked with the corpses of the circumcised, and that the Roman eagle was to swoop down upon an abominate but elect nation, as upon lawful prey. Jesus

alone is calm in the tumult. They think him the civil King of Zion; he knows that he is the Man of Sorrows. They fill the gates with boisterous shouts; he enters them in silence. The elders and Pharisees had dogged his steps, at every turn during his ministry, in a cold-hearted, deep-rooted hatred, ever full of fierce logic. And now the very hosannas of the children startle their ears, and make them livid with rage. Every note was wormwood and gall to them. Their exasperation at the influence of Jesus rose to such a pitch, that the Holy City itself was no longer a safe abode for him. The resurrection of Lazarus made them rage beyond all bounds, and they resolved to bring the formidable peasant to a violent death. They demanded that he command silence on the crowd and children; but he replied that if they should stand dumb before him, the very stones of the streets would find a voice for him; and in their desperation, the Pharisees exclaimed, "The whole world has gone after him!" And so the royal progress pushed on through the street; and wall, and houses, and thoroughfares were filled with one dense mass of excited humanity, every stranger asking, "Who is this?" And the universal answer was, "This is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth!" Just as you would expect, when once within the city, he made his way directly to his "Father's house," the Temple, and, as was meet, the boys who waited upon the priest clustered round him, and made the arches ring with praise until timber answered to beam. Then the strangers in Jerusalem thronged these sacred courts to hear his teachings. Languid sufferers came from every quarter to be healed. The blind and the lame came to him in the Temple, and he healed them. This munificence truly indicated the healing virtue which he would bestow upon the sin-sick eight days hence. For while there was joy in the heart of the people, Jesus was only a decorated offering in his own sight. As a king he was anointed from on high, but for more effectual rule than that on David's throne. He bows passively to the enthusiasm of the people, but meekly he hints to them the true character of his reign, by riding a borrowed beast, the symbol of peace, instead

of using the fiery war-horse, or the thundering chariot. Was this the heading of a seditious outbreak, or the regal entry of an ambitious vanity? Nor did he come exercising imperious justice, or riding on the clouds of heaven, but simply as the Prince of Peace, before whom aggression and conquest sink into emptiness. He combined his claim to kingly right with a jealous care not to excite political envy in the growing powers. The great retinue which attended him was of those who neither courted his alliance, nor of slaves who had been vanquished by his arm. Each transaction of the day pictured to the people the lowliness which he taught to his subjects. And when the sun went down that night, leaving the Temple in gloom, save as the flickering lamp ever burned upon its pedestal, Jesus, who had been the idol of the masses that day, bent his steps back again to Bethany, that he might rest once more in the quiet upland hamlet whence he had come with the rising of the sun. Worn and weary himself, he had made many a heart glad that day. Many a limb that was racked with anguish in the morning, rested in health in the eventide; many a fever had been cooled, and many a leprosy cured. And as Jesus returned to Bethany, the evening star which glimmered over him was seen for the first time by some poor blind wretch whose eyes Jesus had opened that day in the royalty of Messiahship.

My dear friends, does the kingship of Jesus delight you to-day? I ask not that you will give him the garments from your bodies, but I ask that you will give him the hearts which throb under them. I think that he must have remembered you that day in all his tearful sympathy. Then the sacking of Jerusalem should warn you not to neglect the tears of the despised Saviour. No man can stand firmly before the tears of Jesus. They either win or crush him before their insufferable sight. Shall his gentle love win you? The Jews made it a rule to separate the Paschal lamb from the rest of the flock on the 10th day of the month Nisan; and, as nearly as we can get at the fact, Jesus went to the Temple on that day, to devote himself for you. *Oh! do not despise his dignified love; nay, rather can you not*

join to-day in the hosanna-chant? It is said that about the year 818, when Abbot Theodulf was in prison at Angers, for a conspiracy against the Emperor Louis, that he composed his sweet hymn for Palm Sunday, and sung it in a moving strain just as the Emperor passed under the prison walls in the procession that day, when it so touched the emperor's heart as to lead to the freedom of the prisoner. I trust that the hosanna of the children, mingled with the pensive tears of Jesus, will to-day put palms in your hands and joy in your hearts, that you may swell the loud jubilant hosanna too.

Vintage Gleanings from the American Pulpit.

A man with a small mind cannot understand the value of time. A great soul staggers under its weight. When the sun is risen, he says it is passing fast; when it is gone, I cannot call it back. Great men carry their watches in their hands; they feel the tick in their hearts, in the pulse of the arm. So Christ felt how brief and valuable was the day. He says: "I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!"

Did it ever occur to you that you have a mission from God? What made Martin Luther say, "I will go to Worms, though there may be as many devils as there are tiles upon its roofs"? What made the "pillow of stone soft to the cheek, and the wild berries sweet to the taste," of Wesley? It was because they felt that they were men of destiny. God had laid upon them special duties. They pressed forward to things that were before, to their commission from God. All have a mission. It may be the minister in the pulpit, the deacon in the pew, the father and mother in the family, or the little child in the street! Christ caught his atoning enthusiasm from the conception of this thought.

When travelling in the Holy Land I procured two little vials which I filled with water from the river Jordan. The liquid in one of the vials is filtered, so that it is clear as crystal. The other bottle still contains the sediment of the water. One represents the soul not cleansed by Christ. Shake it a little, and the sediment in the bottom rises and discolours the liquid. There are some men who can no more stand shaking than can the unfiltered water. The other bottle you can shake until the day of judgment, and it will remain pure and clear. Such a heart has the man who would not do on Monday what he would refuse to do on Sunday. To him every day is a Sabbath. He is religious and just. The church will never be perfect, the world will never be converted, until we cease to separate the *secular* from the holy.

ARE CHRISTIANS NARROW?

BY REV. DR. DEEMS.

"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."—1 COR. ii. 2.

THIS text leads us to examine the question whether Christianity has the tendency to make men narrow in any department of character. Paul is a representative Christian as well as a representative preacher. He preached to the Corinthians all that had done him any good, and all he knew that would do them good: that was, the crucified Jesus Christ.

At the first announcement, this seems a narrow basis on which to erect a private character and a public life. But Paul deliberately adopted it. In his case it succeeded. He believed it must succeed in every case. So he determined not to know anything among his brethren "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." To a Greek, occupied with his philosophies, to a Roman, taken up with his politics, it must have seemed absurd to have only one subject of thought and only one theme of discourse, and that the character and supposed offices of a man who had died shamefully on the cross. Even now the superficial scientists and the engrossed materialists of this age regard the whole system of Christianity as a narrow theory, and the whole matter of preaching as a very small affair, and both as standing in contrast with what they would be pleased to have considered as the liberal arts.

Does the history of the mental development and practical life of Paul, or any other Christian, confirm that view?

Before proceeding to the direct investigation of that question, let us remind ourselves of certain things taught by the history of mind. It has been known that men have attempted to liberalize themselves by dipping into all the arts and sciences, having a little or great knowledge in every possible department, keeping the Admirable Crichton for their model. It is fair to admit that such persons have become most pleasant society men, have been agreeable and entertaining, and have made some figure while they lasted. But how long did they last? What is the size of their figure and the weight of their influence a century after death? Compare them with the men who have each taken some great field of intellectual labour and devoted their lives to it, and how small they seem.

Compare this Admirable Crichton, just mentioned, with Copernicus, for instance.

At seventeen years of age the former is reputed to have mastered the whole circle of the sciences, to have been able to speak and write in ten different languages. He excelled in painting and fencing, in riding and dancing, in vocal and instrumental music. He had the most extraordinary strength and beauty. Before he was twenty he challenged the learned men of Europe to dispute with him in twelve different languages, on "any science, art, discipline, or faculty." He bore off the palm in this extraordinary trial. Many other things are told of this wonderful Scotchman, many being undoubtedly fabulous, but all showing the great variety of his attainments. But was he a great character?

Almost twenty years before he was born there died in Prussia a simple-hearted Christian recluse, the astronomer Copernicus. In early life he conceived the idea of a new theory of the universe, the very opposite of that which had prevailed for twenty centuries. To the demonstration of the sun-centre theory of the solar system as opposed to the earth-centre, this student, who went into society simply to preach and practise medicine among the poor, and who regarded general conversations a waste of time, devoted forty years of his life. In science, he

determined to know nothing but the centre of the system. He discovered and demonstrated it, and died with the last page of his book fresh from the press. But he had turned the whole current of human thought, he had revolutionized science, and there is not a living man on earth to-day who does not reap the fruit of that forty years' devotion to one thought. From his labours men have been able to make navigation a wider science and a safer art, and thus build up such cities as London and New York. But what has Crichton done for the world? His life perished like a splendid rainbow, while that of the one-ideaed Copernicus fell on all fields like fructifying showers.

Then Paul may have been right, on correct knowledge of the laws of thought, in selecting one single topic for study and preaching. He was not naturally a broad man—rather narrow. His Pharisaic education had still more contracted him. He was of the "straitest sect" of the narrowest school of the most illiberal nation. He grew to be the deepest philosopher, the broadest humanitarian, the most practical business man, and most tender, happy, loving, and beloved man of his generation, and of any of his generation exerted the greatest influence on all succeeding times.

Such, my brethren, I hold to be the effect of devotion to the knowledge of "Jesus Christ, and him crucified," on any human soul. And these are just the elements of character which every man should desire to have developed in himself. It may do us good to take up these several topics, and see, if we can, how it comes to pass that a profound, devoted, affectionate study of Jesus, in his character and offices, has this effect on the human character.

1. This knowledge of "Christ crucified" raised Paul to be at the head of all the philosophers. It was done thus: God begat man with a desire to know. He could not be God if there was anything he did not know. We are sure that we are his children, because we inherit from him a desire to know everything. If we were not finite we *should* know everything. As it is, all the ablest of the Father's children are perpetually engaged in

seeking to know the fixed causes of the constantly changing phenomena of the universe, and to bring into a system all this knowledge, and to reduce this system to the last possible simplicity of unity. And this we call philosophy.

The study of Jesus led Paul—and, dear brethren, will lead you and me—into the perception that the spiritual underlies all the physical, that the material is only an expression of the ideal, that there is a soul to the universe. It is in seeking to explain the existence of such a being as Jesus of Nazareth, and such a life as his, that we come to the underlying basis of the spiritual world. Matter could not do it at all. Now it is so that all questions of bodily and mental health and disease, of the moral forces of the universe, of the social questions of human life, of development and progress, are concerned with Jesus more than with any other one person or subject known to men. We begin to get at a rational cause for the existence of the universe at all. It is not, then, eternal. It was not, then, made for pomp, as a vain and ambitious emperor might on a plain create a crowded capital, splendid with palaces and magnificent with parks. It had a cause. That cause was spiritual. The universe, then, is not an end—it is a means. It is the material for the realization of thought, the field for the operation of moral and spiritual forces. There begins to be the dawn of science. We are no longer to be mere empirics. The material is visible; the spiritual is unseen. The material changes; the spiritual is fixed. The material passes away; the spiritual is eternal. We are getting at causes. We are finding sufficient causes, commensurate with the effects and with probable original intentions on the part of the Great Creator. We are beginning to find a basis for our physical science. The spiritual and the material are not two parallel currents running side by side; they make one. The natural cannot exist without the spiritual, and the spiritual demands the natural. Nature is the outside, and supernature the inside, of the universe. The Deity, the goodness of God, necessitated the things that have length, breadth, and thickness.

We are now pushing forward and down and up in philosophy. We are simplifying, we are unifying. We have found causes. We have found one cause. We have found a simple conception of the Creator bursting into myriads of splendid worlds. We can read the physical world aright only as we connect it with the spiritual. There was no astronomical science fit to be called such, until such humble and wise and patient Christians as Copernicus and Galileo, and Kepler and Newton, with their hearts in their brains, and their brains in their eyes, and their eyes straining after God, found the ponderous orbs floating on the bosom of the Creator, as richly-freighted ships on an immeasurable sea. And now, in geology, chemistry, physiology, or any other branch of science, no man is a discoverer, no man is an enthusiastic teacher, who does not perform his experiments as a saint prays, and does not connect every atom of matter with the pulsations of the spiritual world.

The same is true with the department of intellectual science. There is a cosmical science. There is a metacosmical, if my learned hearers will permit me humbly to suggest a word which is not yet, I believe, in the dictionary, to suggest that which traces all the products and harmony of the universe to the first principles in the mind of God, as metaphysical science traces all kinds of knowledge to the first principles in the constitution of the mind of man. We have unified the cause: is the end one? All the efforts of the human intellect, thus far, have gravitated towards the oneness of beginning and the oneness of end. For what, not as an originating cause simply, but also as a finality, was all this universe of worlds and men created? "For him," said Paul, speaking of Jesus.

For a moment suppose Paul mistaken in the centre, you must perceive how grandly he grew in all his intellectual and spiritual proportions upon discovering that there was a centre, whether Jesus was that centre or not. He was to physical and metaphysical, to cosmical and metacosmical science, what Copernicus was to astronomy. He simplified and unified. We have not yet found the centre of the physical universe; but we have

found and demonstrated that there is a centre to every system, that that centre is moving around some other centre, and we believe that there is one last, supreme, unmoveable point, measurelessly far from our world, around which all worlds revolve. The man who shall determine that exact spot shall wear the last, the grandest starry crown among the princes in the Court of Astronomy. Paul did more. Jesus was to him what an upheaved section of the earth is to the geologist, showing all the strata of the earth's crust. He saw the strata of the universe in Jesus. To know him, in all he was and in all he did, would be to know the whole material universe. Science has no other basis so broad, philosophy has no other element so simplifying and unifying all the works of God. "The heavens declare the glory of God," but that glory "shines in the face of Jesus." For all that work which found its consummation on the cross of Christ all the other works of God were wrought. Believing and teaching this, Paul became the philosopher who lifted a light which is now the central splendor of all human intellectual efforts and results.

2. This study of the crucified Jesus enlarged Paul, as it will enlarge you, my brother, into a broad, intelligent humanitarian. Recollect the age in which he lived, and the nation from whom he sprung. It was not an age of humanity. Indeed, never had our race right views of the value of humanity before Jesus came.

Greek culture had, it is true, brought about a respect for the possibilities of the body in the direction of symmetry, and of the intellect in the development of the æsthetic or taste side in human nature.

Roman culture had done nothing humanitarian. It is true that some one tells the story, that when the famous verse of Terence, "*Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto*" ("I am a man, and no thing human I regard as foreign to myself"), was repeated in the theatre, it was received with a burst of applause by the Roman audience; but that always seemed to me the expression of startled surprise at such a conception, rather

than the shout of brother-hearts; for that same multitude would sit in the amphitheatre and see a hundred brawny fellow-men "slaughtered to make a Roman holiday," the very women never wincing at sight of atrocities which should have made the Emperor faint. That very Emperor would sit upraised, and without a pang receive the partings of the gladiators as they turned their faces to his throne and said, "*Ave! Cæsar, morituri te salutant*" ("Cæsar, those about to die, salute you!") It was not man as man who had claims on their hearts. Romans were something, men nothing.

Of all people the Jews were the least humane. Jews were something, men nothing, Samaritans dogs, and Romans wild beasts. They would never respond to any generous sentiment founded on the brotherhood of man. It was to be characteristic of Messiah's reign that then the Jews should put their heels on the necks of the nations. Jesus incensed his nation by lifting all men to the same plane of favour in the sight of the Heavenly Father, and making the individual man the most precious of all the precious things of the earth.

Paul believed that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man. He believed that he was Christ, the Anointed, because he had received a setting-apart for this very purpose. He believed that he rightly bore the name "Jesus" because he should be the world's Saviour—Saviour not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. There is no view of humanity which so makes every man precious to every other man, as the doctrine that the Eternal God became flesh, that the Deity was incarnated, that love prompted this advent and this investment of the Godhead with Manhood, and that love found its last greatest expression in a voluntary suffering and self-sacrifice, made for every man, in which every man had an interest, and which, somehow, should bring good to every man. Fact or fable, it is the most stimulating and most noble and most broad of all propositions. It takes in all there is of God and all there is of Man. It binds all parts in one. It is to the heart of man what the doctrine of universal gravitation is to his intellect.

The latter is the simplifying, unifying scientific idea of the head, the other is the simplifying, unifying, harmonious sentiment of the heart. They are counterparts. All the atoms of the whole material world rush toward one another, because they rush towards the centre. All the individual hearts of our whole humanity rush toward one another, just as all feel the attraction of the loving crucified One.

Point me to any other basis of philanthropy which is equal to that. Why should I love all men? Some of them are hateful enough, and some of them hate me: why should I love them all? If you tell me, "Because God made us all;" then I reply, "So did he make horses and dogs;" and I know some horses and dogs that seem to have more sense and better temper than some men and women. There must be some deeper and stronger reason than that, some bond of love that is stronger reason than that, some bond of love that is strong. Here it is supplied. Jesus is the very highest possible conception of complete and perfect manhood. He is the brother of each and every man equally. In his life and death each man has precisely the same interest as every other man. What makes me at all an interesting object in the universe? It is not mere existence and individuality and identity. It is that I am personally born of God, his son, and am loved by him, and am capable of feeling and returning that love. Jesus taught me that. Jesus established for me the brotherhood of man by notifying to me the Fatherhood of God. What he has done for me, Jesus has equally done for each other member of my race.

Far above all considerations of what any man is, or has been, or may become, is this crowning fact, that *for that man* the Son of God lived and died on earth. This is Paul's reason for adding and emphasizing the phrase, "and Him crucified." It was not simply the teaching and miracle-working Jesus whom he had determined to know, but the Jesus who was capable of giving love's supreme proof to the world in his voluntary self-offering, a propitiation of our sins, and not for ours only, but *for the sins* of the whole world. Now, no matter how bad any

man may be, Jesus knew it all, and loved him and died for him.

It is on God's philanthropy I must found mine ; otherwise it will be most defective. Such, history shows, is the philanthropy which does not come from the knowledge of Christ crucified. The class A will kill the class B out of "philanthropy" to the class C. It will always be found that this is a false philanthropy. There is another motive : for philanthropy is love to man as man, irrespective of opinions and qualities ; and the class B are men as much as the class C. Paul was lifted to that broad love for man, by refusing to know among his brethren anything except their relation to him who had loved them and given himself for them, the just for the unjust, to bring them to God. The more he knew of that love the more humanitarian he became, until the distinction between Jew and Gentile, between Greek and barbarian, between bond and free, between male and female, lost itself in the great fact of man—in the great fact that man was the object of the love of the Heavenly Father, as taught by the dying Redeemer.

3. At first sight it might seem strange that devoting one's self to the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and him crucified, should make practical business-men more than any other culture ; and yet, in fact, it is so ; and if, in fact, it be so, we must suppose that there is a reason for it in the nature of things. Let us see if we can find the reason.

We shall find great diversity of opinion as to what constitutes a good practical business man. He is not such certainly who does not in the beginning set before himself distinctly an end worth the devotion of his life ; nor he who does not use the methods reasonably adapted to the gaining of that end ; nor he who does not push his work by sustained efforts to its legitimate conclusion ; nor he who does not promote the general weal in gaining his own ends. Some of you are great merchants, a few of world-wide fame. I appeal to you : is not that last statement correct ? However great energies a man may have, if he throw them upon the market pell-mell, pushing the world all around

him, stirring things with a promiscuous rush, he certainly cannot be called a practical business man. He is a steamer of great power, but rudderless. He is consigned and steered to no port. Nor, if a man shall have set his aims and determined his ends, is he a practical business man if he vaguely hopes they will accomplish themselves or come to pass without the use of those methods which men know will produce such results. He is a dreamer who counts his gold only in visions. Nor, if a man show great strength and sagacity by fits and starts, is he a practical business man. He is spasmodic. He affects his connections as a locomotive does the passengers in the train when it takes them forward by jerks and strains. Nor, if a man gain his ends, and leave commercial circles and the general community no better, but rather worse, for his operations, is he a good practical business man. He is an acute, selfish, perhaps successful operator : that is all.

Out of all these classes does a knowledge of Jesus, and Him crucified, lift business men. They no longer set their aims to be the mere accumulation of money as an end. It is to them a means. They watch its growth and study its capabilities. The highest end of life is to live nobly and usefully—nobly, at least, if not usefully. If money have any power to increase a man's nobility, they study that and seek to employ it on themselves and their children. They, therefore, never become slaves to business, but keep business servant to all the highest interests of themselves and their children. Believing in a spiritual world, in the superiority of that to the material world, and yet greatly and rightly valuing the material world for its uses ; believing in the love of God for him and his fellow-men, and that business is one of God's shuttles, wherewith he weaves the web of brotherhood ; having no purely personal ends to subserve, his passions are calm, he can do work for the Master with all his powers unperturbed. He can never fail, in the worst sense of that frightful word.

The knowledge of Christ crucified lifts all men in the love of a *Christian business-man*. He knows that, no matter how many

millions he might accumulate, if he left society injured by his operations he should not be accounted a good practical business-man. No trade is good which does not profit both buyer and seller. The world has not gained by a transaction in which one is enriched by the impoverishment of another. And "God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son"; and Christians must so love the world. And this love for "the world" gives broadest, largest, deepest views of all the world's interests, and widens the range of vision of the Christian business-man.

Then there is another view. The crucified Jesus "brought life and immortality to light." All life is made more practical. We are not groping in the dark any longer. We see just what we are to live for. All life is also made more grand by being set with immortality in the light. Our dirtiest shops, and busiest counting-houses, and most important banks become grandly solemn when we reflect that these transactions have no "clearing-house" in the grave, but go forward into eternity: that every act of business will be busy for ever, modifying all things everywhere perpetually. No man whose knowledge of the crucified Christ has given him assurance of his own immortality can afford to "fool" with business.

It was just such culture that made Paul one of the most practical of men. Full of business, never idle, never hurried, "the care of all the churches" on him, study and trouble and work always pressing, he succeeded in organizing Christian societies whose existence has long since closed, but whose influence will go on for ever. So, dear brethren, those men who make a business of their religion and a religion of their business, not regarding the up-town church as the only place for religion, and the down-town store as the only place for business—these men, by the knowledge of the crucified Jesus, become the greatest, the best, the most practical business men. This text, "I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," is as good a motto for *your* counting-house as for *my* study—for the merchants as for the preachers.

4. Lastly, it was this knowledge which made Paul a tender, happy man, loving and beloved in his generation. Paul does not seem to have been an amiable man naturally. He was rather hard in the grain of his character. His education had not mended that; and in reading his history and his works one can scarcely refrain from feeling that he had, early in life, been unfortunately and uncongenially married, although, if that was the fact, it is obscured in the narrative. From being the hard, ambitious student of Gamaliel and instrument of the Sanhedrim, how tender he became! How he loved his friends, and the churches, and the world! The cross had softened him. If Jesus was the Christ, anointed for the world, how the Father must love the whole family. If Jesus went to crucifixion, humbling himself even to the death of the cross, how tenderly would Paul's eyes look upon all who were subjects of such human and celestial love. He did not preach the Gospel on a cold sense of duty: he loved to proclaim Jesus. He worked for a support when it was necessary, that he might have this blessed privilege. He magnified his office. He was all the sweeter for being so strong. Those natures that are sweetish are not quite sweet; but when great, grave, powerful men, carrying weights, working prodigiously for the accomplishment of great results—when they are tender, gentle, and good, how sweet is their heroic tenderness, gentleness, and goodness!

Such was Paul. His love begat love. Read the salutations in his letters. See what friends he made. In Corinth there were Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: and there were Tychicus, a brother beloved; and the slave Onesimus, "a faithful and beloved brother," and his owner, Philemon, a dearly beloved fellow-labourer; and Aristarchus, Paul's fellow-prisoner; and Mark, Barnabas' nephew; and Epaphras, of Colosse; and Luke, the beloved physician; and Nymphas, who had a church in his house; and Aquila and his wife Priscilla; and the whole family of Onesiphorus, at Rome, who were not ashamed of Paul's chains, but sought him out and refreshed him *with their ministration*; and the beloved Apphia; and Phebe,

“our sister, a servant of the church at Cenchrea;” and Andronicus and Junia; and Amplias and Urbane and Strachys, the household of Aristobulus and Narcissus; and Rufus, “chosen in the Lord,” whose mother Paul tenderly calls his; and Tryphena and Tryphosa and Persis; and the company of Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, and Hermes; and Philologus, with Julia; and Timothy, his son in the Gospel; and Nereus, with his sister and Olympas; and Epenetus—all beloved, all named in his epistles, with others whose names have, perhaps, escaped me, but who are written in the Book of Life and in the heart of Paul: men, women, and children, people of rank, and of low life, slaves and their owners, learned and illiterate, what an array of friends whom Paul had learned to love, and who had learned to love him.

And now, dear brethren, consider this case. Here was a man born in a province, taught in a sectarian school, reared under every political and ecclesiastical influence calculated to cramp and embitter him, driven from his own people at last, and killed by their conquerors after years of persecution. This man became a profound philosopher, a wide and consistent philanthropist, a man of great practical business capabilities, and a tender, noble gentleman, by dropping his ecclesiasticism, turning from all the philosophies which at his time were considered liberalizing, and devoting himself in thought and affection and life to the study, the love, the worship, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, and him crucified. No other culture ever made such results. Will you now dare tell me that Christianity is not liberal, that Christians are narrow, that the religion we preach to you is in the way of human progress or individual advancement? Will you content yourself with any smaller results when these are at your command? Will you desire your ministers to find other themes, when Jesus crucified touches all that is important in heaven and earth? What else should we preach than what we know? Remember that not a solitary worker in society during the past thousand years has set humanity forward an inch who has not, like Paul, determined

to know nothing among men except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Whatsoever knowledge or work does not lead us to this knowledge will prove worthless to our souls, and perish. Other knowledge may vanish away, but the knowledge of Jesus endures for ever. Therefore the Great Master himself has taught us that this is perpetual life, to know God and him whom God hath sent. Life to the brain, life to the heart, life to the life—there is no knowledge like knowing the Crucified.

Come, ye students, whose ambition seeks to explore every field of human knowledge, and stand with me at the gates of eternity. It is examination day for graduating into the higher classes of the unseen world. "What knowledge have you gained during your mortal life?" is the test question. See what crowds of young and old, what grave and tall and reverend heads are there, what simple people and what great. Hear their replies. One says, "I have learned the languages, Latin and Greek and Hebrew and Sanscrit, all that conveyed the wisdom of the ancients to their successors; and I have learned them to their roots, down to the seeds of earliest speech." Another says, "I have acquired the principles of all physical science, have explored the planets, and comprehended the Cosmos." Another says, "I have mastered the principles of political science, so that I have learned to govern empires and lead peoples in splendid processions up the highways of material prosperity." Another says, "I have wooed and won every Muse, and become ruler in the palace of Art, and form and colour and sound have become my obedient vassals." Alas! there stand a poor widow and her little child. In the presence of such greatness they blush and are abashed. They feel that these great men have fitted themselves in some measure to pass into the skies. "And you," says the Angel of the gate, "what have you learned?" The mother bursts into tears, and stammers out, "We don't know any of these things. We are not learned. We only know that Jesus was crucified for us." And the innocent child bursts into one of his Sunday school songs,

that which these orphan children who fill the seats at both sides of us on Sunday mornings sometimes sing,—

“Jesus loves me, that I know,
For the Bible tells me so!”

See, the gates fly open! The great Apostle to the Gentiles seizes the poor woman and humble child in loving embrace, and the Angel of the Examination passes them up to the higher forms of the school of Christ, while Paul assures them that he had determined to know nothing on earth save Christ and him crucified, and that he had found nothing else worth knowing in all the heavens, in all the centuries of his devotion to whatsoever there was to be learned in eternity.

Now, on this basis will you not build? It will stand all storms and earthquakes and heavenquakes, and you may erect thereon a structure of growing immenseness in all eternity.

THE LONG DAY OF GOD.

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

"A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday, when it is past."—
PSALM xc. 4.

IN order that we may measure best the value of life, we must keep in mind the wide expanse of time upon which God projects his plans. All grouping of earth's affairs into the limits of one's own few years is childish. The earthly years must be a small part of individual life, and hence must be a poor background upon which to group the causes and effects of action, the reasons and explanation of conduct. Such a verse as this from the Psalmist, that "a thousand years are with God only as yesterday, when it is past," ought to awaken man to some conception of the nature of his own being, and to some better understanding of his daily moral, or intellectual, or religious work. If the Jewish nation, and all the earliest nations, took a humbler view of man's career than has been entertained since the world has grown larger in its science and general thought, it need not be wondered at, for not only had they no Christ to be the direct exponent of a future life, but they had none of those vast sciences which have in later days so expanded the time of the universe. To the religious spirit the vast distances of the stars, and the inconceivable time-spaces over which their light flies, and in which these circles are completed, must come with a reflex influence upon the soul's estimate of its own life, *for if a sun may throw its light for a million years, and if for*

millions of years the morning stars may sing together, why should man's highly cultured mind and heart hasten from cradle to dust? Has the Creator no love for his earthly child, and no place for him? It is now found that some of the most remote suns whose rays of light our largest instruments can catch sent forth that ray of light a million years ago. When that beam started across the great abyss there was no human race here, no village, no city upon this large star, but while that ray of light was flying the garden of Eden came and went, nations came and went, Babylon and Athens came and went; indeed, all the events of our historic period have come to pass only while the flying light was closing up its long, long journey. The great time-measurements of the universe may lead each thoughtful mind to feel that these threescore years are only some kind of a morning of the soul, a first breath in its long being, the first dawn, but not the noon nor evening of its day.

But we shall return, after a while, to this thought. Our chief wish this morning is to remind you that the great times of the Creator only imply a great series of events for both his happiness and glory, and for the happiness and honour of his children. With the Deity, such a vast existence indicates only vast events. And these events must necessarily assume the form of a progress in which the present shall become the cause of the morrow, for any other method would either make eternity a monotone, or else a reckless succession like the results of chance, the throwing of dice, or the forms assumed in the kaleidoscope. In order for man to enjoy his world it must be orderly and rational, and the future must be such a consequence that man can, if he chooses, help produce it or shape it to his wish. For his own sake, and for man's sake, God has evidently ordered that all the events of time shall assume the form of progress, the form of a continuous chain, in whose last link to-morrow links itself again. I confess that it would seem necessary that the great eternity of God be full of events, for it is only the sluggish Hindoo, stupefied by idleness and sleep, who can conceive of God as drawing happiness from

repose. In ages and centuries where the mind has become aroused into that action which is called civilization it is utterly impossible to believe in God except as being the supreme activity. When man has once experienced the joy and the honour and the spiritual greatness that come from a noble activity, when he looks upon the varied life of the civilized part of the world, his mind would become atheistic if it could not believe that God is not a spirit of sleep, but of perpetual life. God is indeed such a supreme and never-resting activity that he never slumbers nor sleeps, but is always poured out, as it were, all around his children, the bosom to which all may fly from any place and from any sorrow.

Assuming, then, this divine activity, we may the more readily assert that the endless events of this God will assume the form of a progress. This assumption of a universal law is justified by the fact proclaimed in many special laws. The acorn passes to leaf, to twig, to bush, to sapling, to tree, to the great monarch of the forest. In its long life each year is a progress, each day being the cause in part of the next day. Its second year so multiplies the leaves that they breathe in a double quantity of air in behalf of the third year, and the roots of the second year so redouble the nutriment on hand that they also order an advance of the whole plant for the next spring-time. All that we see around us in the organic form is acting under a law of progress, hence it does not seem hasty if we conclude that all the events coming from the Divine activity are occurring in the form of a progression, the present being a result of the past, and a cause of the future. If, as we all believe, man is an image of the Creator, we may read in the human mind a confirmation of the idea that God is expressing himself in a continuous series of events, for in such a career only does man, God's image, find happiness. The worst torture that can befall an educated mind is to be imprisoned where nothing but dead walls surround it. The brain maddens and sinks to idiocy at last under this deprivation of events. The prisoner cut off from the world, not able to watch even the varying clouds upon the sky, nor the scenes

of field or street, will watch a spider all day long in the dungeon, or will count the stones in the wall or the steps of the sentinel in the outer court. In this agony which isolation and inactivity give to man, we may readily read the conclusion that the Maker of man, whose image is in his children, is perpetual action, and draws his happiness from the great marshaling of events in his universe and upon the wide expanse of eternity.

The views which we all inherited from our fathers, that the world began from nothing six thousand years ago, and that God was active over its production six of our days, and then rested, are very inadequate, not only because they took God away from an immense past and gave him only to a recent hour, but also because they took him away from the present, and exhaust his care and presence upon the first week of earth's history. It is necessary that we break away from such a spasmodic theory, and, pondering upon the words that a thousand years are with God only as a yesterday, struggle up toward some conception of this vast time and vast Actor around us.

The events of God assuming the form of a progress, and, as such, reaching far out into eternity, then, to-day becomes a part of the thought and love and presence of God, as truly as was the hour when order first began to disentangle itself from chaos. The idea that God once acted should be crowded out by the idea that he is now acting. The world is a chain in which all the links are equally valuable, because each one is an inseparable part—a part without which there is no value in the chain. Hence you stand as much in the presence of God to-day as stood the earth when God was planting its Garden of Eden for the first sons of man. Any other view than this seems to make Providence only an intermittent force, leaving us at times with a father, and at times orphans or atheists in fact, if not in theory.

It always seemed a humanizing of the Infinite One to image him as having once held a council with himself, and then and there in a far-off eternity as having passed decrees regarding each coming thing or event, as having there fixed the fate of

every infant for joy or grief, and of every mortal and every empire, as there having woven an iron network of fate, into which coming worlds should fly as birds into the snare of the fowler. That the Bible thus speaks of God is evident, but so the Bible represents God as having hands and feet, and as growing angry and jealous; hence it is sometimes difficult to discover where the humanizing of God ceases and the real Deity shines forth. Speaking only for myself, I think of God as not divided up into epochs in one of which he began to know what he would do, and then in another of which he began to keep his own promise, passed in the former era, for all views of God's method in detail are only the exposures of human ignorance; and hence, as being just as permissible and just as probable, I prefer to confess God as moving along in a glorious present, carrying his universe upon his bosom as the blue heavens carry their stars. But neither of these views can be established by reason, because God is beyond reason; hence we leave them both to your personal wish. The subject of "decrees of God" is wholly beyond analysis. Personally, I prefer to feel that God is in all times present alike, and was no more passing decrees yesterday than he is passing them to-day, but is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, always near us, journeying with us in a progress of events.

The lessons for the morning are these:—(1) God is everywhere equally present. His method being that of perpetual activity, there can be no such thing as a universe moving by law, while he sleeps who set the law in motion. It is only the stupor of savages that can imagine an inactive God. The prime quality of mind is activity, and hence the laws of the universe must be only the paths along which this supreme mind is acting, the material media of his wish. That very net-work of law which seems to supersede with many the idea of a personal God may have been given to reveal a spirit, which not otherwise could any mortal detect. Let it be assumed that you and I could exist without this great external world. Made as we are, there *is no point of contact* between us and an omnipresent spirit. In

the Spiritualism of to-day the eye tries to see a table move, or the ear tries to hear sounds that may connect the spirit world to earth. We could not hear, nor see, nor touch the infinite soul. God would be wholly unsearchable. Between man, and what we call spirit, an impassable gulf rolls. It may be, therefore, that the external world, with all its forms and laws, is nothing else than the spiritual God, expressing himself in visible and audible and tangible forms, in order that our souls may possess some outward revelation of the Deity. The light that makes myriads of colours, the sound that is divided up into music, the height and depth that are emblems to us of infinity, the grandeur of the "star depths," and the millions of years consumed in their orbits, may all be the only ladders upon which our humble feet can climb to any belief in a God. The laws of a universe, instead of concealing a God, do only give us one, for they are the footprints of One whose form cannot otherwise be traced. As the delicate wire of Franklin revealed an agency of which he had only dreamed—as it became a Jacob's ladder upon which the invisible angel came down from the clouds—so the whole material world must be concluded as the path where God bursts from his invisible spirit-prison out upon the sight of his children. Hence the laws of nature are not indications that there is no God, or that there once was, but they are the places and the times when and where this Creator continually confesses his presence.

In thinking of the Deity, let us strike out the word "was," and say and feel that our Father "*is*." He is not called the "I was," nor the "I shall be," but the "I am," and out of this definition we may draw the feeling that, each hour we live, we are reposing in the care of this infinite Friend.

Assuming, then, that the happiness and glory of the Creator are found in continuous events which assume the form of a gradual development, and that he is present in all ages alike, then (2) all the incidents in national life and individual life become bound up in the world's progress, as flowers from many fields are bound into one bouquet and into one effect of colour and

perfume. The grave of Elijah Lovejoy, where the freedom of speech and the freedom of the slave began, is bound by this chain of progress to the grave of Lincoln, where the same freedom of speech and of slave found its final triumph. The thirty years between the two tombs into which both these martyrs fell were only a few moments apart in the large day of God, which spreads out like a thousand years as we mortals count time. When you recall the suns, which are a million of years sending their greetings of light from one to the other, and recall the time beyond their time, we can come back to the events of earth, and feel that the martyr at Alton died at six in the morning, and the martyr at Washington at seven in the morning of the same day, and that the heroism of the one floated like a zephyr into the dying chamber of the other. When we recall a day of God, that it is not our minute fragment of time made up of a few hours of waking and sleeping, but, without any sun-dial or night-watch, spreads out its wide expanse until our days fall into it as snow-drops into the sea, then the scattered events of earth array themselves side by side, and the eloquence of Patrick Henry for the freedom of the whites, and of Garrison for the freedom of the blacks, blend in one grand music, and the troops encamped at Valley Forge and the troops encamped at Manassas wake up in the same night at the same long roll-call of the drum. Events which the littleness of man separates are all grouped together by the vastness of God. Events which are now lingering only on the verge of memory—events whose vivid colours are fading because of human frailty, of love, of nobleness, and of recollection—are standing all glorious and all new and beautiful in the wider grasp of our Father. In his memory nothing fades. The upturned faces of the martyrs who prayed to him in Piedmont are as visible as the faces of the children who will repeat the Lord's prayer in this land to-day. The frailty of the human mind, the small scale upon which it projects everything, the feeble outlook by which it attempts to grasp its little landscape—these infirmities break the chains of Providence, and, instead of *giving us a continuous whole*, leave us only a few detached links.

As savages will tear to pieces a beautiful fabric of silk or cloth-of-gold, so we all break history up into small pieces and take to our little souls a little part. We are satisfied with a decade or only the business season that comes with its ninety days. When the "old abolitionists" proposed a convention here, it seemed to many that it was only a form of self-conceit or the childishness of old age that could plan such a review of a dead past; but coming together in their venerable years and thrilling memories they have shown us that it was our hearts, and not the past, that was dead; that while new pursuits and new ideas had clouded those early days of freedom to our short vision, they were all covered with morning light, all fresh with sparkling dew, in the great day of our Heavenly Father. Oh, how far short human memory comes of doing justice to the events of this little world! We shall not blame man nor God, for it may be that this weakness of grasp is given man or permitted man that the sorrows of yesterday may soon fade, and that a few summers and winters passing over the tombs of loved ones may help the ear forget the tones of their voices and the heart empty itself of bitter longings for the friends that are gone. It may be mercy that gives such a fading recollection that sees without weeping the places where

"The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that we have pressed
In their bloom;
Where names we love to hear
Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb."

It may be that the limitations of memory are a divinely appointed *Lethe* into which nature bathes the soul that it may forget its many griefs. Be this as it may as to man, the comforting truth remains, that as to God all national actions and all individual actions are lying upon the bosom of the same long day!

From the fact that the time of the Creator is so immense, and that all the events in this wide area are bound together by a chain, it would follow (3) that some vast occurrences should be expected to come here and there all marked with the greatness

of the Infinite One. When you perceive the distances of the fixed stars, and measure the bulk of some of them, and find also how many millions of years they must have been throwing their arrows of light, do you not feel that a great power has been there? You throw down your small measuring rule and your crucible, and say God has been there! There are, therefore, points of thought where we feel compelled to part with rationalism, and make room for a miracle. We feel compelled to abandon development and floating star-dust, and fly into the bosom of a great Spirit. But if the material realm intrudes upon us at last some event too wonderful, too gigantic for us, and we say, "Here is God," why may not the moral world open also, and somewhere in its long course intrude upon the intelligent creation the vision of a Jesus Christ? The heavens open once for a miracle. They show us a boundary at which we say "God," and pause there, and hence why may not the long years of man have been broken in upon at a place called Bethlehem, to let into the golden chain of events that being called Christ? Having seen that the Creator must be a God of events, that out of events he is elaborating his glory and happiness, and the glory and happiness of his children, how dare we limit him to small events, take away a wonderful Christ, and chain the Infinite One to such an order of things as we can plan for him or grasp with our intellect? As his time lies beyond our time, so that our threescore years do not make one moment of his day that has no evening, so his moral world lies beyond our view, and may readily admit a Christ into it at any Bethlehem, to be transfigured upon any mount. Let us avoid equally the superstition that finds wonders and miracles at every step, and the atheism that believes in nothing greater than our chemistry and our dust. Let us seek such a combination of rationalism and spiritualism as will preserve us from low fanaticism on the one hand, and hopeless atheism on the other.

The "thousand-year" day of God may fully warrant us in supposing that there will appear in his long providence some *occurrences* as sublime, as overwhelming, as are God's *distances*

and God's times in the material world. Reason does not ask for many of these thrilling footsteps of the Deity. Reason does not expect the claims of sorcerers to be true; reason does not justify the idea that a wicked spirit of the dead may bewitch the living; reason does not see the Virgin Mary descending here and there upon beautiful mountain sides to bless our children. It is easy to reject these ideas as being most probably false. Reason need not admit of many miracles, but when we look out upon the vast world of the Almighty, and see its sublime outline of time and space and morals and life, and see God ever present in it, we may throw down at last our rationalism, and open some pearly gates for miracles, one to admit Christ into this world, and one to admit man into immortality. Here we beckon reason to step aside. Let in this Saviour, let out this human soul! Let the grave be its gate of life. The "thousand-year" day of God seems to argue that his children will not be limited to the earthly mornings and evenings, but will rise to where they can, like their Heavenly Father, see the past and the present, rise to where the love and memory dimmed by a few years have many returns to the souls torn asunder in this vale. If in God's sight the children of earth stand near together, so that Paul and Wesley mingle their eloquence, and Magdalen and Guyon mingle their love, and Lovejoy and Lincoln their liberty and blood, then this "thousand-year" day which so mingles things separated on earth should be man's day also beyond the tomb, that there, in blest companionship, souls may meet which toiled here for one end, but who never saw the faces about to follow them, nor saw the golden harvest destined to spring from their blood and tears. If to God the graves of Paul and Fenelon, of Magdalen and the dairyman's daughter of Lovejoy, and Wilberforce, are all close together, under the same flowers and same divine presence, there should be a realm beyond where those sleeping souls should wake to consciousness of their blended lives.

The great day of God (4) argues an immortality for his children—an area of time in which they may comprehend the grand

scheme of progress, and be deceived no more by the narrow horizon of earth, and by a memory which hastens to let the golden yesterday fall away and be lost. It seems the evident destiny of man to rise to a life whose hours are more than twenty-four, and whose years more than threescore and ten. God is the God of events—not of small events, but of great ones. Among these vast events let us always fix our hearts upon three: the miracle that let the human family into the world; the second wonder called Christ; the last miracle that bears the human soul to immortality.

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE WORLD.

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

"God so loved the world."—JOHN iii, 16.

THE "world" which God so loved was not that world of rocks and soils and ores loved by the geologist, nor the world of blossoming plants so loved by the botanist, nor the world of stars loved by the astronomer; but the great army of human hearts moving along constantly from birth to death. An English writer compares the human family to an ever-unrolling web which the loom of time weaves at day and night for ever. The piece comes forth wonderfully pictured, but it is never taken out of the loom, and the loom never stops. It was this living, thinking world which God so loved.

It is thought by some astronomers—and, indeed, the idea needs only to be mentioned to find abundant faith—that as there is no limit to the number of stars and planets, so there can be no limit assigned to the number of inhabited worlds. Given one such a planet as ours, and all difficulty is solved regarding the possibility and probability of a million more of such worlds. What mystery and logical difficulty there is in the way of originating man or any life, attaches to any one man or any one star. One intelligent being having come into existence, one world having been peopled, the logical difficulty is terminated, for a million inhabited worlds are as easy as one. When we recall for a moment the immensity of the universe, and from it

deduce some conception of its Creator, it is impossible for us to suppose that the inhabitants of this little ball are the only children created and loved by such an Infinite Father. Each drop of water being full of life, and all the atmosphere being pervaded by myriads of beings to dance in the sunbeams, it is perfectly incredible that the measureless universe contains no intelligent beings except the group upon this footstool.

The assumption of myriads of populated worlds leads to the supposition that perhaps earth is the only one marred by the presence of sin. Sin being a phenomenon at war with the idea of God, we have no logical right to suppose it to be universal, but would seem justified in feeling that of all the millions of inhabited stars, perhaps this earth is the only one deformed by any vice. It would help us greatly out of that enigma of reason called sin, which led Stuart Mill to suppose that if there were any Creator, he could not be infinite in goodness and power. If infinite in these two qualities, he would not have permitted such vice, and death, and sorrow to overtake mankind. It would seem to help us all in this perplexity if we could feel that this Creator possesses millions of other worlds, all of which are thronged by a countless number of God's children, who know no sin and no suffering. In presence of such a blessed universe the calamity of earth becomes only as one grain of worthless dust upon an infinite shore of golden sand. It may be there is an arena of divine love far away from earth—an arena so vast, and of love so infinite, that in presence of such moral beauty earth alone would seem unable to tarnish the name of God.

In perfect harmony with such a theory comes the idea that God, seeing all else was so pure and happy, looked toward our earth with compassion, and declared that "all must be one, they in him, and he in them."

In the language of the Bible regarding Christ, he is represented as having left a glorious world behind him, that he might cast himself under the law and condition of earth, and then lift it up from its low condition to a place nearer the throne of the *Father*.

Be all these far-off details what they may, we come now to the region of fact, that Christ came in the highest conceivable form of character and power, and made the great multitudes of earth the object of all the days of his life, the end of all his labours, the source of his joy, the cause of his sorrow. The welfare of mankind was his study, his work, his pleasure, his pain. As men have lived for fame or riches, or for the happiness to be won in the field of learning, or art, or pleasure, or ambition, Christ, loftier than man, lived for the flowing stream of human life. He found that stream bitter. He placed himself upon its bank, to throw into it the sweetening branches of his morals, his pleadings, his death.

When the envious rulers, fearing their empire was about to be overthrown; and when the Pharisees and hypocrites, under the withering power of Christ's words and life, began to rise in ominous wrath against the new prophet, Christ could have avoided the cross had he abandoned the people and withdrawn to the shop of the carpenter. But he so loved the world that he went forward with his work for man, although death lay waiting only a few days in the advance. Viewed in any light, in the light of the most severe theology or of the most rationalized, Christ accepted of death rather than abandon the salvation of the people. He knew that out of his teachings and redemptive work a new world would begin to spring up, and hence while in the olive garden he wept tears, which seemed as great drops of blood, yet he went onward willingly to the cross. He had said, "He that would save his life shall lose it." He that in such an hour should retreat to the carpenter-shop or lay aside his vast calling, would save the animal life of his body, but would lose the life and lustre of his soul; but he that should be willing to lose his heart's blood for man's sake would save the endless honour of his spirit. Honour is life, dishonour is death. The former tends to immortality, the latter to oblivion.

Here, then, in this living and dying Christ, lies embalmed the greatest lesson to be learned by mankind. Oh! what are the lessons we learned in the school-house when we were young—

what the lessons we learned even by our mother's knee in early childhood—compared with this sublime lesson of duty toward the world, so deeply written in the life of Jesus Christ? Childhood cannot grasp it. The cold heart cannot comprehend it. The selfish soul remains a stranger to this wonderful law of action. It is only the middle years or the late years of life, and only the highest order of life, that can see the import of this law, that "the human heart must love the world." To do so is Godlike.

What a noble old man was that one of the story, who, when he was in trembling old age, was planting an orchard of little trees, whose blossoms and fruits would never come until he had been placed beneath the sod! When he said he was planting trees for other hearts, the white hairs must have moved upon his temples as though the wings of approaching angels were near. When a heart can look beyond itself, and even beyond its tomb, and love the stranger to come long afterward; when the imagination loves to look onward and see other lips tasting fruit whose sweetness is not for the hand that planted and watered the garden, there is something divine in that heart. It has escaped the infancy that does not think and the selfishness that does not care, and is out in that broad sea of reflection and benevolence where Christ moved, and which alone has the attributes of a God.

Among the great names of earth we must all be astonished to see how powerful to mould mind and heart have been the duties and modes of thought of the statesman. When the duties and studies of the statesman's office have been most conscientiously assumed and discharged, there grow out of that office an education and greatness of spirit not common to other walks of life. The customs of the Guizots, and Castelars, and Washingtons, and the Adamsees, and a long line of such names, was to study the wants of man—as a great human flood rolling along for centuries—in joy or grief, according to the character of the nation under whose flag they are to live and die. It is told in history that when King Œdipus saw the pestilence slaying

his people, he wept, and went out into the streets to pity them, and to pray to heaven on their behalf. All along since that day the highest form of honour has been won in the same way—by help rendered the people, by prayer offered on their behalf.

Some French philosophers, the whole school of Comte, have so long hung over, in thought, this form of service, the service of the many—looking into its transparent depth as the poet looks into the depths of crystal lakes—that they have reached the extreme conclusion that the only worship the individual need render is the worship of the human race. The highest work is not the glory of God, but the work done for mankind; and the only endless life one need desire is the memory of those that shall come after him.

But in this extreme view of Auguste Comte, we see only a great Christian idea torn from its relations, and over-decorated with French poetry and French sentiment. The philosophy of Christ includes all this magnificent devotion to the people, and then adds the Being of God as a spring of such unselfish action, and to this adds an individual immortality, not as a word, but as a fact in the history of soul. This philosophy surpasses that of Comte, because it carries the great scene forward, and makes the “ever-unrolling web” of life unroll for ever upon another shore, with the dark, sad colours all left out of the fabric. But Comte sought a *positive* system, and all positivism narrows the scope of life, and by as much as it finds certainty it loses grandeur; for it is only the least influential ideas that are the most evident to the sense. The existence of wood, water, iron, is evident; about God man may doubt.

If this living for the welfare of the multitude in any way narrowed or diminished the life of the individual, then a Christ-like life would be a career not to be sought, for the absolute injury of the individual would be the injury of the multitude, for that which destroys the parts of anything destroys the whole. It comes to pass, however, that all this grand devotion to others is the highest education and development of self—all those illustrious names made familiar to your ears by history, and by

sermons and orations gained from the world in education of mind and soul, all they gave the world in the form of toil and love.

If Wesley limited his own expenditure to a few pounds, and gave all else to the poor around him, and if he journeyed thirty miles a day for fifty years, all this perpetual sacrifice came back to him in the form of character, and he was richer at last in soul and in the world's love than he could have become along any other conceivable path. In his life-time and being only a clergyman, his gifts to the multitude reached at least \$150,000. This was the outward form of sacrifice. This was a life-long denial of what the world calls self. But the denial is only apparent or comparative. The real truth is, there was a diviner self inside the bosom of Wesley, that was making no sacrifice, but was dwelling in the midst of a mental and spiritual luxury unknown to kings.

God is never a hard master. He does not build up with one hand and tear down with the other. When a martyr is dying for the world's sake a new life is springing up in his own heart to compensate for the blood that is ebbing away.

Underneath the devotion of man to his fellow-men there is lying a hidden compensation. It is not the motive of the devotion, it is invisible and far away as a reward; but, lo! after days have passed by, the great reward breaks out like the blossom of the aloe, which delays its opening for a hundred years.

The doctrine of individual sacrifice involves for the most part a sacrifice of what the world calls property, ease, and pleasure. In the world's estimate there is a group of valuable quantities. They are such as pleasure, riches, houses, furniture, raiment, society in its fashionable sense, the freedom of our own "sweet will." It is amid this group of valuables the doctrine of self-sacrifice plays such havoc. It involves a contempt for these accidents. But when you pass beyond these and reach the qualities called soul, character, fame, the love of God, and the memory of mankind, then all the long *years of self-denial* turn into a harvest of rewards, and the

humility of the past is all erased by the magnificence of the future.

In Christ's years upon earth, the lordly men of great estates and great palaces must have looked with pity upon one so poverty-stricken and, according to their standard of happiness, so miserable, but the misery was only for a few days. The name and character of Christ now fill the earth with their glory, when the kings who pitied his lowliness are dust.

Living for the multitude being the largest duty of earth, God has attached to it the largest rewards—the denial is temporary, the reward is eternal.

It follows from these reflections that all who seem to possess more riches than others, or more education than others, or more information or experience, are by that pre-eminence transformed into leaders of those less fortunate. Those who are thus led, and those who lead, journey towards a nobler life. It was the perpetual study of self that deeply injured the Christian religion in the middle centuries. The injury was two-fold. All except self was neglected, and self was so constantly studied that the soul grew sick at the sight. The soul pondered over depravity so much that it became as low as the imagination could picture. As the invalid that shuts himself up in his room, and spends months and years in contemplating his ailments, at last suffers from all the diseases known to pathology, so the Christian that turns his gaze only inward injures the purity and flow of his soul. As the great open air and sunshine of God stand for the life of the well and the cure of the invalid, so the "ever-unrolling web" of man stands for the ennoblement of those who cast themselves into its powerful influence.

This truth applies as well to the self-love of sects as to the selfishness of individuals. When Christian sects look only inward, and daily take a new measurement of their belief, and daily spring new debates within self, they cannot but neglect the mighty throng that is pouring along the broad road just beyond their sanctuary. The solemn relations of the church to the world should silence its domestic broils, should crush the

"ego" of ambitious spirits, and shame the quarrelsome into silence. There is a "cloud of witnesses" encompassing the church; and millions of them are witnesses who would love to see the church as the gate of heaven, and its doctrines as being divine. There is a multitude that desire to find the church full of frailties; but there is in this country a larger host of calm, thoughtful people, who are daily looking for proofs that will lead them to the fold of Christ; they are willing to be just, and willing to hear.

In the past year there would seem to have been more than the usual quantity of discord within the walls of the various sects. Come how and where they may, they spring from a forgetfulness of the innumerable crowd of witnesses that are looking upon the scene.

A perpetual consciousness of an outside world is the first element in a noble life. Not the consciousness that seeks for fame, but a consciousness that there are millions to be led, to be helped, to be saved; this is the realization of things that helps make the great soul. When an editor rejects words that will only injure the public; when the statesman rises above all bribes, and studies the welfare of the next generation; when the minister tramples under foot the love of applause, and in all the solemnity of a solemn calling speaks the truth as it lies in his heart, all this confessing of the public's presence is the prime element in a useful life.

"God so loved the world that he gave his Son." In what little the world knows of the Infinite One, this was the most beautiful action. The march of Christ, from manger to cross, was sublime. In that march lies a picture of all sublime living. According to that example, what is success? It is not an amassing of riches; it is not the winning of a battle upon a hard-fought field; it is not a finding of a faith and hope in Christ, and the withdrawing into a desert solitude. Success is the happiness the soul draws from the happiness of others. It is the perfect relation of one heart to all hearts. When the *great cloud of witnesses* shall shed their tears of gratitude over

you, and in a grand chorus say, "He has lived for us," that will be success. Christ is the only being over whose head such a chorus can be sung without reserve in the heart. But there have been human spirits that have merited and received grand strains of such music.

My friends, you have met to-day to commune with each other in the name of this Being, who died for mankind. You meet to recall his memory. One of the great themes of reflection in this hour should be, that the great soul, the God-like soul, is the one that lives in the perpetual and tender consciousness of the suffering world around.

The profession of religion is not in order that the soul may be saved that makes the public profession. The visible Church does not make or confer salvation. It is the invisible Church, the Church in the heart, that fixes the destiny of the spirit. The public profession of religion is for the wide world's sake. Your own soul is saved by its secret faith and secret worship. The visible Church is the placing of the candle upon the candlestick; it is the building of the city upon a hill, that it may be seen of those who are wandering in a desert land by night.

As lights are placed on the ocean's shore, not for those who are at home or in the harbour, but for those who are out on the sea, so the Church is the light, not to save those who love God, but to allure and guide those who love him not.

The presence of this on-looking throng should make us see to it that the Church shall not be a deformity in presence of the public, but a charm. It must not grate with debates and discords, but sound in harmony. It must not follow the footsteps of man, but of its great Leader. It must not abuse men, but lead them; must not retreat into self, but must "so love the world" that there shall be no broken hearts beyond its sympathy, no multitude away from the sound of its voice, no islands in the broad seas beyond the reach of the ship that shall sail with the sign of the cross and under the banner of redemption.

THE GOSPEL INVITATION.

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

"Come, for all things are now ready."—LUKE xiv. 17.

THE Kingdom of God is compared here to a feast to which guests are invited. Let us follow the ideas of the text in the order in which they stand: the invitation to "come," the readiness of all things, the present the time of the coming and of the readiness.

The invitation to come is in harmony with the Kingdom of Heaven, and in harmony with the character of man. An invitation implies a happiness. When a calamity or a sorrow is before us, we are not invited to it—we are drawn thither by an irresistible power. But when earth has a joyful event, or one that promises happiness, invitations are issued, because it is not conceivable that man would need to be driven toward happiness. Thus the invitation harmonizes with the Kingdom of Christ, for it is a happiness. Whether you contemplate that kingdom as reaching through eternity with its blessedness, or as filling earth with its virtue and faith and hope, it is the highest happiness of which we can conceive. It is, indeed, a feast of love, of knowledge, of virtue; and hence is a blessedness worthy of the word "come." The word is also in harmony with the character of man, for, being a free agent, he is not to be forced towards blessedness, but only invited. The honours of the

world—literature, oratory, wealth, statesmanship, learning—lie before the human race as simple offerings from the Creator, and whoso will may come, and all are invited to come to them. Thus religion respects the free agency of man, and does not force itself upon him as a fate or a decree, but moves before him and says, "Come unto me." The question might arise why God left anything to human choice: why he did not create man in fixed virtue and fixed culture, as the wild dove is born to gentleness; but there is no answer to the marvel any further than this, that the nature of intelligence seems to involve the idea of free will. A soul without free will would seem to be no real soul. To have chosen God, and virtue, and benevolence of one's own free choice must be the noblest consciousness of the heart. The invitation "come" is, therefore, in harmony with the nature of the soul, and should be accepted as one of the beauties and excellencies of the Bible. This word did not prevail in the Pagan religions, nor in the Mahommedan, but in its stead were the common laws of inheritance, or else the compelling sword. We, who enjoy an age of liberty of the individual, should bless God for a religion which, embodied in such a being as Christ, expresses itself in an invitation breathed forth not only in words, but in his whole character. What sorrows there are in this life, and what ones there may be in the next, are not created by Christianity, but by the previous wickedness of mankind. Christianity did not create a hell. It came into the world because suffering already existed. And hence Christianity is not a vengeance, but the invitation to come away from a vengeance. Punishment is a human work and possession; Christianity is a mode of escape. Christianity comes after the world's worst fact.

Now this word "come" contains no deep mystery. It is not a tantalizing request to do what we cannot do. It is not irony, as though one should say to a blind man, "See this rose!" or a deaf mind, "Oh! please hear this music." The Bible is the last book in the world to be accused of trifling with the soul, for it is the soul it loves, and for it it prays and weeps. The old

theologians used to toil hard to show that the soul cannot possibly make any move of its own toward a new life, that the invitation "come" is extended to all, so that in this way the elect few may catch the blessed word; but the Christian Church has outlived this metaphysical spirit, and now supposes that the word "come" is in the Testament, not as a mocking or irony, but as a kind, sincere appeal from the Saviour of mankind. It is not to be inferred from this that the heart can correct itself and forgive itself and sanctify itself; but what is to be inferred is that the will is not a mockery, not a dead monarch, but is a king upon a throne, and can command the soul to go many a path that leads to God. You all know that you can read the Testament this afternoon, you can attend the worship of God all this year, you can breathe a prayer, you can change this path for that, and this being so you can begin the grand "coming" of Christianity. You can all start upon a heavenly road, for there is not a movement of the heart toward God that is not a part of this large "come." If a sinful person conclude upon a certain morning that to-day "I shall attend church and try to enjoy the truths or the hymns," that conclusion is a footstep toward holiness. Where the human ends and the divine begins no one can tell, any more than in nature one can tell where the rain and earth and sunshine cease to work in the verdure, and where they are supplanted by the presence of God. There is no tree that stands in the woods by its own act. God is there. So no Christian stands up strong in his own sole effort. God's grace is somewhere. But yet, for all this, great is the power and responsibility of the soul. Nothing in religion can be true that renders void the law of personal effort. A philosophy that tells a man that he cannot do anything in morals is false, because it reduces life to a sleep; it is a mental suicide. There have been Christian sects that have held to the idea that no soul can do anything toward its salvation; but these sects have immediately perished, and have left the reliant and the working denominations to possess the field. Because work is life, waiting for fate always decay and death. The old iron-clad Baptists have

almost ceased to exist because their doctrine, that man can do no good thing, killed them, as the fish go blind that swim in the caves where there is no light. We may depend upon it, that when the Saviour says, come—when the Bible says, work out your own salvation—the meaning is that the human will may and must toil amid the woof and web of virtue, as the armies of men toil in the markets and streets. To the soul's indolence death comes; to the soul's industry immortal life.

But we pass by this "coming," and go to the second thought. "All things are ready." I shall not restrict myself here to the exact import of the text, but shall accept of the words in all their breadth and application: 1st, Religion is ready for you; 2nd, You are ready for it; 3rd, The world is ready for you to receive it.

1st, Religion is ready for you. Having passed through myriad shapes—Pagan, Mosaic, Grecian, Roman—religion seems to have found in the Gospel of Christ a final readiness for human use. The filtration of four thousand years has given the world at least a faith in which it may live and die; for in a faith in which man may live perfectly, he should not fear to die. Oh! what summing up it is of the best thoughts and actions and hopes the world has ever known. It begins with the definition of God, that he is one eternal, unchangeable infinite in power, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth and a spirit everywhere present. From this sublime conception of God, it proceeds to a parallel estimate of man. Man is not a brute, but a spirit—the image of God reflecting all the moral attitudes of the Creator. This soul is declared to be immortal. Then the sinful nature of the soul is confessed, and the cure of the mighty wound unfolds itself. God is embodied in a Saviour all merciful, all powerful, brought near to man in the chariot of flesh. Then follow the attitudes of the soul in its journey to this Lord. It passes through penitence, faith, charity, holiness, hope, like an angel flying to heaven through crystal air. All that the human mind has ever reached, or felt in the inmost sentiment, is contained in the religion of this Lord. The hymns and prayer and hope and joy of all, the old nations see in it all.

their good, nothing left out except their error and their sin. Reason may learn to deny all religion, Science may hear and then teach Atheism, but when the thought turns to a positive religion, there is at last one ready, the religion of our Lord; it is ready for you and me. But when we have declared it ready as a philosophical system, we have only told half the truth, for to this it adds the readiness of an ever-living Father and Saviour standing by each of you as a mother, and waiting to welcome you. The God that made you all, and endowed you with such mind and souls, stands as ready to receive you to immortality as he was to cast you upon the shores of this life. Oh! what a Heavenly Father he is, for he that unbars to us the gates of this life will not bar to us the life to come. Ready, therefore, is this religion with all the intercession and love of God, and with all the interest and hopes of man. Rationalism and scepticism may attempt to tear down this worship, but it cannot build one that can ever surpass it. All that remains to infidelity is to deny; all that remains to a religious nature to accept.

Let us proceed now to our second head:—*You are ready* for this religion. I do not mean that you feel ready, all and all alike, for there are doubts and sins that stand between the soul and religion. These do not stand between the soul and Presbyterianism and Methodism, as is often thought, but between the heart and those deep principles that lie above all sects and creeds. Many say, “Your creed is so difficult and entangled that I am not ready to profess your faith; but there is a discord deeper than this, for when this objecting soul is alone, away from all sects and creeds in its chamber of solitude and thought where there is nothing but itself and its God, there is no prayer and no hymn and no communion, but an onward flow of impiety and neglect. The separation from God does not take place at the border of Calvinism or Arminianism, but afar down in the heart, where the theories of man have not come, but where the sea of sin and unbelief roll in a discord and bitterness old as the human race. Oh! blessed heart, between which and God *nothing* intervenes except the difficulty of a Confession of Faith or

a Book of Common Prayer. This heart is near the kingdom, for God will bear it over those creeds as he hands his sunbeams over a rivulet or across a mountain range. What is a heap of rocks or a continent to the far-darting sun? What will a difficult doctrine be to the heart that loves our Lord? The Lord will bear it onward from earth to heaven, as his light streams across the formless void, and finds, at last, earth's verdure and the happy faces of earth's children. Were the line of separation at the line of some church, then would we all be ready; but the line of separation is deeper—it is in the sinfulness of the heart. If this is not true, then you ought to feel a conscious readiness to come. The obstacle is not in the world without, but within. But I have said you are ready. In what sense? In this: that your life has come to its responsible, intelligent years. The lineaments of God—knowledge, wisdom, reason, love, hope, life—have all unfolded, and here we are all to-day, moving in all the spiritual qualities of Deity, and yet are willingly in the vale of sin. The ignorance of youth has passed away: we are children no more. Vice has revealed her wretchedness, and virtue her utility and beauty, and with intellects so discerning, and with an experience so complete, and then clothed with the attributes of God, we are all marching to the grave, a solemn gateway between action and judgment, between time and eternity. These facts make me declare we are ready for that sentiment called religion, that makes man one with God. The human race is a vast procession moving toward the great gate of death. The multitude pours in and disappears from us at the speed of three thousand five hundred in an hour. In such a march, this city would all pass the iron gateway in four days. We are all in this vast pageant of mortality, and hence, arguing from your noon-day glory now, and from the solemn sunset to-morrow, I confess that we all are ready for the Gospel of Christ—ready for its virtue, its mediation, its sunny hopes.

It is against my taste, for the most part, to appeal to final utility, *final calamity*, in order to find the value of Christianity,

and hence must say that this vast human procession that is marching toward the grave is marching through society first—society with all its summers and winters, joys and sorrows. We are all ready for religion, not only on account of the final judgment of our spirits, but also because of the years, few or many, to be passed with all we love here. In the wicked heart there is a never-dying worm here in this world. A being made in the image of God is transformed by sin into a heart empty of self-respect; a heart whose motto must be concealment, and whose most perpetual feeling must either be that of a hypocrite or a penitent. Either feeling robs the eye of its brightness and the heart of its liberty. We know that repentance is a Christian virtue, but this also we know, that perpetual penitence reduced the cloistered monks and nuns to the lowest level of civilized beings. Long contemplating themselves as worms, as brutes before God, self-respect gave way, and a system that began in sackcloth ended in mental weakness and the riot of all bad passions. Repentance, like a thunder-storm of an hour, may clear the air, and give us a pure sweet day in which all nature smiles; but frequent penitence, like a long damp climate, sends a mildew to every line of hill and vale. A life of penitence is a death, a life more than conscious sin; and frequent sad hours are a poor state of soul compared with the career of him who rises above known sin, and lives in the faith and hope and virtue of his divine Lord. We confess that the tomb will need religion, a fitting dress for that great solemnity; but he who is living a life with the image of God in his nature, and with a soul that will hold all the stains of vice as well as it will retain the charms of virtue, has no year anywhere where irreligion can be anything else than a bitterness and an infamy. Life and death join and plead for religion with blended voices. Let us assume, then, our first two points, that Christianity is ready for you, and that you are logically ready for it; we pass to the third point: Society is ready for you to accept the gift.

I hope that old day has wholly gone when men were afraid to profess Christianity, lest an outside world might ridicule their

“new life.” Little of this fear is any longer perceptible. I imagine that the growth of individual liberty—the growth of the consciousness of it, rather—has silenced both the ridicule and the sensibility to it. It is only ignorance and narrowness that ever ridicule the profession of religion. Hence, by as much as the public culture advances, by this much does the public put aside all interference with a man’s religious profession, and, indeed, goes beyond this tolerance, and gives us all its approving smile. The only thing the public still hates is a bigot or a hypocrite, and progress will never do anything but deepen this form of abhorrence. Therefore, in its deeper study and toleration of personal liberty, society has become perfectly ready for you and for all its children to become Christian. It will no longer express any regards for one’s sect, but if any of its children desire to profess the Christian faith, it not only does not oppose it—is not even silent—it bows in sincere approval.

But we pass from this conscious readiness to that of need and fact. Society is toiling to-day under the awful calamities of vice, slavery, dishonour, and crime, and is sorrowfully ready for millions of wicked ones to read and imitate the life of Jesus Christ. When society was ruled by brute force, as in the days of Cæsar or Peter the Great, it mattered little what might be in the hearts of the populace, for, if it was crime, there was a policeman for each citizen; and if it was sorrow in the heart of woman or child or slave, nobody cared. But in our day, when the vice of the heart breaks out, and there is more reliance upon education than upon the knout or chains, and when the upper classes have reached an education that makes indifference to sorrow impossible, in such an age society begs the Christian religion to come to its help. In the old empire of Cyrus, there were, all along the highways, criminals with hands or feet cut off, or heads of offenders raised up, to keep the populace in constant fear. What that age demanded in its heart was not a gospel, but an ever-present police. It did not know of anything better. But our land, based upon the nobleness and equality of man, and springing up out of brotherly love, and every day

strengthening this sentiment by education, silently begs that its millions, high and low, shall come unto Jesus Christ.

You know how hard it was for Mr. Lincoln to sign the death warrant of a deserter. He thus reflected the deepest sentiment of his country; for its whole prayer may be summed up in the divine words that it is unwilling that any should perish, but that all should come unto a change of soul. There never was a nation before that was so dependent upon the quality of the individual mind and heart. Hence, society here, full of love for man, and touched with pity for poverty and ignorance, is more than ready for you and me to come to religion—not to its church name, but to its spiritual essence. It casts itself at the feet of its religious children, and says, “Stand by us in all hours.” But society has a meaning broader than the words state. It means humanity. This vast living throng is ready for you to become Christian. Whether its slaves need liberty, whether its intemperate need reform, whether its children need Sunday schools and daily bread, whether a burned up city needs the help of all nations, whether a Memphis stricken with pestilence asks you to help nurse its sick ones or bury its beloved dead, humanity everywhere asks you to come to this Jesus Christ. Come in your manhood or womanhood, in your youth or old age. Come while you are still with humanity, and there remain for you a few days this side the sepulchre.

“THE ETERNAL HOUSE.”

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

“*Because man goeth to his long home.*”—ECCLESIASTES xii. 5.

IN some of the commentaries of the best scholars this term “long home” is translated by the words “enduring house,” or “perpetual house.” It seems to them that the writer looked upon earth as the embodiment of the perishable—of the dissolving—and that beyond the earth man passes into the unchangeable. The same writer says, “The dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit to him who gave it.” The doctrine of a future life is taught in the Old Testament, but there is a vagueness about the condition of the soul beyond this existence. The Old Testament idea is much like the indefinite terms now used by men in poetic or non-Christian speech. In the common intercourse of the street and of public life, men now speak of “the farther shore,” and of “passing beyond,” and of “going back to God”—terms very indefinite, and, for that reason, popular, in that they satisfy Pantheist and Deist and Christian alike.

The Old Testament idea of a life to come is equally vague. This indefiniteness may have come from a public lack of study and a conclusion in that direction, or it may have resulted from the fact that the Hebrew church was political more than spiritual, and that its written record is chiefly the history of this politico-church of earth. The Christian church having

separated itself from the state, and having become the exponent of the soul, became also the exponent of immortality, and upon one page says more regarding the second world than can be found in all the Old Testament Scripture.

Regarding the impressive words in our text, "Man goeth to his long home," I feel that the old writer had in his thought the modern indefinite idea of a "farther shore," of the "other side," and did not mean to dismiss the dying man to the regions of eternal death, but to the regions of a "perpetual house." This world is the place where silver cords are loosed, and golden bowls broken, and where the mourners go about the streets; beyond this all these dissolving views cease, and the spirit dwells amid the eternal. Its house is for ever, its love is for ever, its life is like that of God. David had said, "The child cannot come to me, but I can go to him." Hence he must have conceived of some spirit world in which the child was dwelling. The story of the witch of Endor and the soul of Samuel shows that in the public belief there was a world of departed souls lying somewhere near the world of the living. The spirit of Samuel was evoked. Jacob's vision of the angels passing down from heaven and up again is one of the most beautiful hints found in the Hebrew age that the world beyond was teeming with a population of angels—that is, of glorified spirits like the spirit of man. Hence our text must be interpreted in harmony with a future life.

The pensiveness of the language and of all human utterances about death does not argue a belief in oblivion, in annihilation, but is only a confession of the mysteriousness that surrounds the final exit of man from this life. So far as earth is concerned—so far as its friendships, its pleasures, its business, its intercourse are concerned—death is the end. Here we shall meet the loved one no more. Be our years a hundred, the one that left us in our youth will never come back.

It is up from the valley of earth much of the solemnity of *death comes*, and not from the wide-spread unbelief in a *here-after*. We all love earth; we all love life, its pursuits, its

hopes; and when a loved one goes away from it, or we are ourselves full of the thought of leaving it for ever, a deep sorrow comes up out of the partings on this side of the grave, rather than from a sense of annihilation beyond. It is as to earth we use the word "for ever."

Were any one of you about to leave a loved circle of friends here, and a loved home, and remove only to some island in the Pacific, where it was perfectly certain no friend of former years would ever come, and where country and city and climate and friends were all to be left behind for ever, tears would fall day by day and night over the great separation, not because the islands in the Pacific were unreal or empty of beauty and happiness, but because of the goodly realm to be left behind. Thus I suspect that death draws much of its bitterness from the wreck and ruin it brings of things upon this side the grave, leaving out of estimate the problem of futurity. The melancholy springs up from the world left behind us.

I do not propose any formal argument to-day of any kind, but shall ask you to think upon this idea of "an eternal house" for man. Now that science is indirectly assailing this future house—assailing it by placing man among the mere productions of nature, among the plants and the fishes and the birds—it becomes us all to place as against such a form of science the longings of the mind, and to find in the soul's yearnings an antidote to the coldness of materialism. We must array spirit against dust. All that materialism rests upon is an analogy: the tree dies, the insect dies, the bird and the fish die, and therefore man dies and becomes nothing. But spiritualism can summon as good an analogy. It can say God lives. He passes on from age to age, and hence man passes onward parallel with this Maker. This argument assumes only the existence of a God. With that datum all becomes easy, for man sustains a closer resemblance to Deity than to the tree, the bird, the fish. He is an image of God, and hence analogy places man in the divine class rather than in the mundane class; and makes man a partaker of the long being of Deity rather than of the

short career of the vegetable or brute world. The analogy of man and God is as rational as the analogy of man and dust. All we need do in order to escape the annihilation inferred from material philosophy is to place man in the category of spirit, and then claim for him a parallelism with Deity. We must claim a peculiar soul for man, and demand his release from the companionship of brutes and insects and ferns and grasses. In any form of argument any one may follow, resort must be made to assumption at some point; but to look upon the form of a Jesus Christ or of the noblest of human beings from Paul onward, and declare that those faces and mind and souls are brothers of the ape and the mammoth and the elephant, is the most immense assumption ever proposed to human reason. The assumption of a God, and that man is God's image, is a simple hypothesis compared with the dogma of materialism.

We shall not, however, argue the question of immortality. We design only to ask our hearts to ponder upon the idea of the "eternal house" of man, and see how grand it is, and what a bracing atmosphere surrounds it. No one carrying such a mind and soul as man is endowed with has any right to move along through these formative years without enveloping himself in the best possible atmosphere of truth, or of dream at least, if positive truth refuse to come. As invalids flee from low damp valleys to climb up into mountain air, that their blood may find pure nutriment and flow with new life, so the soul and intellect born into the valley of ignorance should fly from the miasma, and seek mountain heights of belief and hope. All ideas being free and accessible, the mind that will suppose that the worst ideas are the most real has no business in this world. The assumption that the highest ideas are the truest is the only one worthy of being made a foundation of life. Hypothesis being equal as to probability, we must choose the best. This idea, that beyond this dissolving world there is an "eternal house," is the greatest intellectual notion the human mind can entertain. Virtue, and hope, and beauty, and symmetry of education, arise from it like flowers from a rich soil. It is the great cure of

sorrow. As the grave is the greatest calamity of earth, the "eternal house" is the greatest consolation. It has come to all the families that have ever lived upon the face of the earth, and all that are now living will have to resort to it before many days or years shall have passed. All along, from the mother of Abel to the mother that lays her son in the tomb to-day, or shall do so to-morrow, this hope has come. All the great names, from Abraham the faithful to Cato the wise; all the dreamers, from Jacob to Scipio, have looked up to immortality for the beautiful outcome of these years. Life has always been explained by that picture.

There is no one reflection which has so commended the "eternal house" to me as the thought that this house is transient—painfully, almost unjustly transient. The children of earth are so pitilessly swept away into the tomb, with all their friendships and studies and arts and happiness and longings, that we are plunged into deep wonderment whether there is a God of love and wisdom all around this earth, as close as its atmosphere, and warm as the tropic sunshine. If such a loving God envelopes this ball as a mother's arms wrap her child, how comes it that such havoc is being made of its inhabitants, by day and by night, and there is no outer sign of God's pity? To preserve to us the idea of God comes this idea of the "perpetual house," an idea born out of the tears of earth, as a rose out of rain.

Supposing the human race to be six thousand years old, this will give us about a hundred and fifty generations that have lived upon this globe; and as they have all passed away, the reflection comes that one hundred and fifty times has death stripped earth of all its happy inhabitants. Men have always looked forward with terror to the end of the earth, when fire, springing up from all compass points, shall sweep away its millions, old and young. That would indeed be a great catastrophe; but a greater event has already occurred. One hundred and fifty times already has death swept away the entire human race. Earth has been emptied one hundred and fifty times into the tomb.

Should some convulsion of nature come now and remove the nine hundred millions from the earth, that would be only what death has silently done over and over again. Where are the throngs that once went up to the temple of Solomon? Where the elegant multitudes that moved through the streets of Athens in the days of Pericles? Where the crowds that covered the Nile Valley in the days of the Pharaohs? Where the throngs that moved along the streets of Rome in the happy days of Augustus? Where the millions that lived in the seventeenth century of France and in the days of Elizabeth in England? If you turn aside from the thought of the absent millions, and think of individuals, then what a ruin has been wrought in all the past centuries! What a catalogue of names can you recall! There are Abraham, David, and Isaiah; there are the names of Cæsar, Virgil, Cato, Antonine the Pious, Aristides the Just. Follow down the stream of time. There are Dante and his Beatrice, Luther, Gustavus Adolphus, Penn, Fox, Washington, Lincoln. Oh! what myriads upon myriads of grand characters have gone away from this encampment never to be seen in these earthly streets! There is one name we have not dared place in this category. Though we have thought only of the great, he is still greater than they. What has become of that being called Christ? Is he, too, lost in a past oblivion? Were his life, his intercessions, his pleading, his sufferings, all misplaced? And is there nothing more of Christ remaining in the universe than of the lily which grew at his feet?

Almost all that is valuable in this world lies back of its present living souls. The heroes that live are but a handful to the heroes that are gone. All the arts we now enjoy are the fruits of intellects and souls that have gone away. Our state was purchased for us by hands that have dissolved into dust. All the ministers of religion now living are not equal in power to the one Christ who died at Jerusalem eighteen hundred years ago.

What has become of this sublime past—this past whose temples of law and art and worship are crumbling by the Nile,

and by the great sea, and by the Tiber, and are covered with old ivy in England? There is but one answer worthy of our minds or our hearts: and that is, that this impressive human race has been called not to oblivion, but to its "*Eternal House*." These phenomena of earth, this great past display of intellect and love and learning and wisdom and morals, belong not to the realm of material, but to the realm of the divine; and hence, as God reaches over ages, and is not subject to decay and annihilation, so he draws his children along after him to his perpetual mansion. This is the only solution of man's being that does not make reason and morals and education and hope all unmeaning terms, and does not make the human soul a sounding brass full of noise without music.

As science has come now to exalt material things, and by inference to make man the parallel of the tree and the fish, religion may justly come forward in all these days to reaffirm the greatness of the soul, and to announce that rational immortal life is the chief quantity in the limitless universe. Instead of shutting man up upon earth, instead of making this the alpha and the omega of his life, we may affirm that as there are planets greater than this world, and systems grander than ours, so there may be in these uncounted worlds homes perpetual to which the spirit of man repairs when the body returns to dust. Think of that gigantic sun called Sirius. Although it is one million times as far away from us as our sun, yet its light springs grandly across the abyss. It is equal to three thousand suns like ours. Twelve millions of miles in diameter, it must be the centre of a system magnificent beyond that system of which our little earth is a feeble, half-dying member. It may be that there is moving around that Sirius an earth having a climate of perpetual spring, and the diameter of that second earth being perhaps a million of miles, it would be a beautiful home for all the mortals that have ever lived upon this footstool. Assuming intelligent life to be the highest destiny of creation, is our little earth the only orb of souls?

The words of the text, "*eternal house*," not only recall to

mind a lost past to be provided for, but they awaken in our mind thoughts about the future. Our earth will some time cease to be habitable by man. As its geologic forms show that it did once at least become uninhabitable, and by perhaps some sudden extinguishment of the sun did become a globe of ice such that the great mammals were frozen to death as they stood; and as at some other epoch this same little globe did all melt and become liquid as a globule of molten iron, so again in the coming centuries it will cease, suddenly or slowly, to be the home of man, and nowhere upon its whole surface will there remain even a Selkirk for its deep solitude. The mind almost laughs at such a speculation. But there is little conjecture in the picture. That the heavens of man will pass away as a scroll is rendered certain, not by the prophecy of Scripture alone, but by the testimony of nature, which shows us in the earth's rocks what changes have at times come like a storm upon this now peaceful star. As man has gone away from the Lybian desert, and as great races have been swept away from the places where the Atlantic now rolls, so there is doubtless coming a day when the earth will wholly cease to be the habitation of man.

It must be that from a star of such vicissitudes, from a star where death comes in a few years to all, and where it came in thirty-three years to such a being as Jesus Christ, and from which one hundred and fifty times all the dear hearts upon it have been swept away, the Creator is transferring these ephemeral myriads to a more lasting home. There must be, somewhere, a "perpetual house," into which we shall all fall when the earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved.

THE EXPECTANT ATTITUDE OF THE REDEEMER.

BY REV. JOHN PEDDIE, D.D.

"From henceforth expecting."—HEBREWS x. 18.

THESE words proclaim the attitude and occupation of our ascended Lord. The world is full of thoughts about the Christ of the past and the Christ of the future; but it needs its attention to be called and recalled to the Jesus of the ever-present and ever-passing *now*. We look back with gratitude on what he has done; forward, with joy, to what he will do when he comes again to judge the quick and dead. But where he is, or what he is doing through the intervening years and ages, is liable to become a barren blank in his sacred relation to the church. We may have all felt the difficulty to realize a far-off friend. Fond memory will picture him as he was when we walked by his side in bygone days, and took sweet counsel together; hope will be telling us what he will be when distance shall no longer divide us. But what is he this hour? How thinks he and feels he now? Ah! what faculty of the soul will reach out its hands and take back to us every moment the full measure of that abiding love on which we need to lean? There is a similar struggle to realize an absent Saviour. As the pendulum halts an instant at either extreme of its motion, so our minds seem to settle more readily for a little, at least, midst the facts *which cluster* around his first and his second

coming. But between these two fixed points in his history they too often vibrate without any solid idea in regard to him to which they can cling and upon which they can rest. We have in our conceptions the Christ of yesterday and the Christ of the future for ever, but seldom dwell with delight on the Christ of *to-day*.

But it was this thought he would have disciples take into their hearts when he sent them forth to their work with the words, "Lo, I am with you always." Paul reached this relation when he wrote, "Much more shall we be saved by his life." Valuable to the world as is his first and second appearance on the earth, none the less precious is his present appearance at the right hand of God for us. It is in this attitude the language of the text brings him before us. It tells us what are his thoughts and feelings during that great interval between his freely giving himself up for all men, and the final gathering of all things unto himself. Could we always think of him as he now is, it would give us wonderful power in our mission. We need not heed the angelic caution, lest going back too much in our thought we lose sight of a living Jesus midst his bygone mortal weakness, sufferings, and death. And, on the other hand, we must notice the warning to the early Christians, lest we stand too much like them on the tiptoe of anxiety about rewards for what we have done, pining for the return of the Master to pay us for our feeble and unfinished toils. "From henceforth expecting." Oh! had we a constant vision of Christ in his present attitude it would settle and calm our souls in all their conflicts, and strengthen our hearts for whatever God gives us to do or suffer. It would teach us the things from which we had the right to look for results. It would help to displace our human fancies with heavenly products that never die, and enlarge and ennoble our lives with plans and pursuits whose measure and inspiration would be "looking unto Jesus." In presenting to your consideration this expectant attitude of our risen Lord, let us notice *its origin and end*.

1. *Its Origin*.—There is no vindictive threat in the Scriptural

saying, "The hypocrite's hope shall perish." The inspired man saw no interposition of a Divine hand tearing it up from his heart, but he beheld it falling off from his soul, like all surface things, by a necessary and natural law. Kingsley tells us that Queen Elizabeth died at last with a whole volume of Ecclesiastes written on her heart. Solomon's "vanity of vanities" belongs to all who sip at the same shallow fountains. Everthing in this world sooner or later withers that goes not down amidst its undying life roots. Every expectation for which there is a realization here or a resurrection hereafter must be deeply buried in lasting and legitimate sources of being.

In the light of this thought we may see, as the prophet declares, why no fear of failure or sense of discouragement should take possession of Christ. His expectation is not composed of the fabrics out of which the most of your desires and day-dreams are made. When the Apostle said "from henceforth," he saw Christ's eager anticipations connected with mighty moral forces which were for ever filling them up and pushing them on to their final fruition. To what, then, in his past story is this expectant attitude of Jesus now so closely related and joined? That word "from" roots it in something already done, so full of power and promise as never to disappoint his trust. It indicates that he felt he had accomplished something at last from which most glorious issues would evermore be springing—that he had planted his work so deep in the soil of the world's soul that the cold frosts of neglect or forgetfulness never could upheave it; its leaves would never wither, and in every clime and country it would grow, and go on bearing all manner of fruits for the healing of the nations. Like the seamless robe he wore, there is unity to all his spiritual struggles and soul and body sufferings.

We would not dissever what God has so closely joined, or institute comparisons among parts all needful to make the complete whole. But it is evident from the text that his own eye is fixed on something peculiar in his story, which he regards as the tap root and life of all the rest, and without which they

will fall dead and worthless to the ground. What is the source and origin, then, of this great expectation which so engages and fills up the thoughts of our exalted and divine Redeemer every hour? It is said "good words can never die." If that is so, then no man could have ever trusted his fame and influence so safely as Jesus to "these sayings" of his. No one ever expounded or expanded truth as he did. The most common word beneath his touch took on meanings as wide as eternity. But though enraptured hearers around him often exclaimed, "Never man spake like this man," it is evident he himself did not trust to mere utterance to float on his name for ever. Great as he is in this respect, yet not as a teacher did he stand up before the world, or sit down since then expecting at his Father's throne. As that alone, like other instructors, he would have had his little day. Others would have eclipsed him even by borrowing and making use of the original products of his brain. And as pigmies climb on the shoulders of giants and look taller than they, so intellectual dwarfs would have gotten up on his ideas, made themselves more famous, and projected themselves farther into the future than he. Every thinker knows that ten thousand times this has been the fate of genius—to be scaffolding on which a much smaller but cunning soul will stand to be seen of men. And so as the close of life came on we find a sufficient silence on his lips. "Hereafter I will not talk much with you." He would use no longer power in words. He would husband his soul forces, and throw them all into one great final effort which would make good the truth he had already spoken. We find no set speech where the mystery of suffering deepens to the bitter dregs; only a few broken payments when he surcharges with vital value, and seals all his previous teaching and testimony with his death.

Neither is this expectation rooted in his wonder-working power. As Pilate and Herod were made friends by common cause in his condemnation, so his disciples agreed with the powers of darkness in advising Jesus to push on his kingdom by *the magic* of miracles. But with a pure and piercing vision, he

saw that this would never meet the world's deeper wants, or take a firm and lasting hold of the inmost heart of man. So he never wrought one to make display of greatness—in each we behold an ultimate purpose of healing revelation or redemption. He knew that miracles, teaching, example, all centred and culminated in his death; it (strange though the contradiction may appear) was the *life* of each and all of them. He saw that it would be as a "*sacrifice*" he should remain glorious and mighty in the eyes of God and men for ever. This is what the Apostle teaches us in the text, when he tells us, that after having offered up himself he sat down at the right hand of God, and from that hour henceforth he began to expect. There, my brethren, is the source from which his eager and not to be disappointed longings for our salvation spring, the fountain from which, if I may so call them, his immortal hopes well up in his heart each moment. We may learn here the mistake of our ministry. We hope great things for our preaching when we have been able to plant it on the strongly intellectual and scientific basis. We come back puffed up with pride from the proclamation of sermons wherein we have upset the sceptic and the infidel, and demolished Renan and Tyndall to our heart's content. We sit down in our studies and begin "to expect," looking earnestly for the revolution such wonders of thought will work in our church and community. But we watch in vain. Such sermons hardly ever bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness on changed and regenerated lives. The history of all controversial preaching will prove it has contributed but little to the world's salvation.

Not by irresistible arguments are we to seek to chain men's minds to the everlasting throne, so much as by pictures and presentations of the divine nature and love, are we to endeavour to fasten the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Jesus to the finer feelings, deathless gratitude, and affections of their breast. We must never lose sight of the subduing power Paul beheld when he exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." "A living, dying Jesus

seen by the eyes of faith," that is the only vision that can satisfy and set at rest the heart of an awakened burdened sinner, and scatter the shadows of condemnation and despair settling thick and dark around the lost and guilty soul. We must never forget that with his own eye fixed on the vicarious death he should die, he said, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw *all* men unto me." Yes, *all men*! The cross is the test and the measure of *manhood*. Every true manly and womanly soul responds to its charms. And he is not a man, but a demon, who will not sooner or later "sink by dying love compelled, and own Christ as his conqueror." Yes—oh! yes—all other ways of winning men to God will fail. The cross is the only lighthouse that for our ruinward drifting race can withstand the storms of ages, and lift its head so high as to throw its rays all around the world, so that no bark of life can sail out from or sink beyond the beckonings of its blessed light. And never till our thoughts and toils have been coloured with its crimson, and truly conveyed its spirit to the world, like our ascended Lord, have we the right to sit down and charge our doubtful hopes full of undying assurance, and look forward to results with unwavering faith.

But these words, "from henceforth expecting," hint to us more inward and heart-searching thought. The great Apostle tells us, looking at his own trials and pains, that he was filling up what was behind of the sufferings of Christ. In every Christian's history there are two crosses: one he beholds on Calvary without him, where his Lord's body and heart were broken for him; and the other he sets up in the centre of his own soul, on which self and selfish interests are crucified in behalf of Christ and men. Brethren, we can hope but little for our labours until they have been planted in the soil of this kind of personal experience, which makes us one with Jesus. Was the Psalmist here to-day, he would permit me to change the form of his promise to the toilers in God's vineyard into a condition, connecting it with the eternal laws of cause and effect in the spiritual kingdom, and say, "Before you can come back rejoicing, bearing your sheaves with you, you must go forth

bearing precious seed, weeping while you sow it." Have we forgotten that the germs of salvation, given to his Son in the pledges of the Eternal before the foundations of the world, had to be bedewed with his tears and watered with his blood; that he had to feel the travail of his soul before he could see and be satisfied with the work of redemption prospering in his hands; that it was after he had passed through these he assumed the expectant attitude?

To the question often asked, "What do you consider is the secret of Spurgeon's success?" perhaps no better answer could be given than a quotation from the biography of one who in his day was instrumental in adding many to the Lord: "A good man, full of faith and the Holy Ghost." Is he not a genius? Yes; but that is not the force which wins in him or in any man, nor the hidings of his power. There is nothing more untransferable than genius and talent. They belong to the individual as much as personal identity. They are like the form and feature of the flower, which cannot be given off. The world may look at you and admire you for these; but if these are all you have, like stars you will shine in the distance, and dwell apart from men. But spiritual goodness, ah! that is the fragrance of life, which fills every place where you move, that goes out on the wings of every wind, wafting around you the virtue that is transmuted by the touch of every needy hand. If you have genius joined to goodness it will widen your usefulness. But as Jesus said, "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone," so a similar fate awaits the gifted and the great, unless, in the depths of consecration, they taste the bitterness of death in self-devotion to the interests of humanity. At the dedication this summer of the forty-seventh chapel Spurgeon has aided in building in and around London, after the sermon, out of the purse ever open to the cause of God and the claims of the poor, he gave \$500 to pay the heavy debt. My heart exclaimed, "God bless you! In that self-denial and generous giving, far more than in the noble words you uttered to-day, do I see the germs of promise for another rising church."

Our power to bless others, we have a right to expect, should increase the more trials and self-denials we have behind us, or rather embedded for ever in our history. It was after Christ had been transfigured on the mount of joy, crushed in the garden of sorrow, nailed to the cross of shame, and came up out of the grave feeling in every fibre of his nature all that life and death could give, that he made sorrowful hearts burn with joy as he talked to them by the way. And as the years glide on with all they bring, and by blessed or bitter experience our souls get a firmer grasp on the words of life, there should be a mellow ripeness about our ministry it never had before—a balm in our words for the weary and heavy-laden they never had when the world but lightly touched us. Instead of being regarded as pulpit-outcasts when “hoary hairs shall our temple adorn,” they should be taken as tokens of fitness for a richer and fuller service. And they will be, if only, like some men we know, we keep our hearts fresh at the fountains of immortal youth, renewing each year sympathy with our race, as the everlasting hills reclothe themselves with spring and summer verdure. Turn now to this expectant attitude of Jesus in

2. *Its End.*—We distinguish this by an immediate and more remote end. If the wish cannot be always the father of the thought or deed, it is certain to be the friend. Just as the earth needs a pure and favourable atmosphere above it to send up its growth and beauty, so our efforts for God and the right need thrown around them the clear, warm air of glowing hopes, would we have them blossom and thrive. The murky soil which is every day flinging its heavy fogs over the growing grain will bring on the blight and the mildew, and defeat the harvest in spite of the rays of the sun. And the surest way to hinder, if not utterly to destroy, our moral and spiritual enterprises, is to be casting over them every hour these gloomy doubts which arise on the soul. Such a course may check and even stay the helping hand of God. Are we not told that Jesus, in a certain place, did not do many miracles, because of the people’s *unbelief*? Study history, and you will see that the struggling

infant Church of God, in every age and place, is more in danger of being cramped and crushed by the despondency of its friends, climbing up upon it with its cold and slimy folds, than it is of being driven from the face of the earth by the hatred and violence of its foes. For the fearful and faint-hearted, then, comes ringing through the centuries—"Have faith in God." If the text teaches us anything it certainly is this lesson—that when we have done our largest and noblest best for the cause committed to our trust, then we are to cherish no rude doubt about it, but take our place at God's right hand, assume the expectant attitude, and joyfully watch the Almighty do his work. But the difficulty is, that when we return from our Sabbath toils with weakened and worn-out powers, we enter the rest of exhaustion, corroding anxiety, and forebodings about what we have done. In such a state too often in our sky is pictured the midnight of despair, all of which tends to make us, instead of rejoicing like a strong man to run a race, to come out from our chambers with faint hearts and enfeebled hands for future efforts. We forget or fail to find the prophet's secret of receiving strength in God—to fall back each night on the Divine breast, and sleep sweetly in the everlasting arms. As far up as each day we faithfully finish our life work we should come, like Christ, to the rest of completion and confidence, and hopefully think of the morrow. We need to take off from our eyes the dark and gloomy glasses through which we too often read the precious promises of God. Take this one of Paul's—we often utter it—"Ah, yes! a Paul *may* plant and an Apollos *may* water it, but God, after all, must give the increase!" Who taught us so to torture divine truth to fit our wretched state? Read it as he wrote it, and what do we see but the Eternal God, through his established means, marching on his church to his triumphs. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase"—a narrative of closely-related spiritual struggles and successes, following each other as certainly as the sweep of the stars or seasons in their course. When the farmer puts his seed into the soil, then through the

months of summer it is his to sit down by God's right hand and look for the ripening harvest. Yes, by God's right hand! For while the expression means a local and limited place by his side in the heavenly home, where he dwells in light, revealing himself as he is, it also implies wherever in his infinite universe he manifests his power; wherever in the kingdom of nature and grace the divine energy works through forces men call law, there is the hand of God. This was the idea of saints of old when they sighed, "Awake! awake! put on thy strength, O arm of the Lord!" It is the core thought of the pledge where redemption is promised to his people by revealing and making it bare. Now, since Paul has said, "He that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting," and the poet, gathering up all words of inspiration on the subject, has sung,—

"Thou canst not toil in vain;
Cold, heat, and moist, and dry,
Shall foster and mature the grain
For garner in the sky"—

having sown our seed on the breast of the moral world, is it not ours to sit down by God's right hand and look forward to the glorious harvest? Believe me, the hopeful atmosphere of our soul's expectant attitude will hasten on the fruit.

Having shown that the immediate object of this expectant attitude will be a sustaining and life-giving power to ourselves and the work in which we are engaged, even this result cannot be fully reached till we take into consideration its more remote end. Tennyson tells us that he

"Doubts not but through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

No man's thinking and feeling can be great and Godlike till it takes a firm hold of issues which have their full measurement in things beyond his own brief day. We shall never come up out of the consciousness of almost certain defeat and the low and little life of dependency, till we fasten our faith on to plans of

good for ourselves and humanity which will find their perfection somewhere in the eternal years of God. If you notice, this is the sublime nature of the present expectation of Christ. It goes not up and down in his breast as he watches the ever-changing lines of the conflict between good and evil here below, but it fastens its eye on the far-off hills of final victory, where the right is eternally triumphant, and the wrong for evermore put down. "From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." Compared with this, what is the character of our expectations? Are they not too often half-fledged things that flutter over the earth, coming down every day in the dust of disappointment, instead of being immortal hopes of the strong wings which fly across the abyss of time and space, and nestle safely with Christ within the veil? When he was coming back over the ocean this summer, a friend of mine told me that on the only clear evening they had, all hands came on deck to watch the sun go down in the sea. More beautiful he became each moment as he sank towards the water, and a universal sigh seemed to rise from every breast as he dropped like a burnished ball of gold beneath the wave. Just then there was a rustle of wings, and looking up he beheld a bird starting from the rigging back towards the east. Ah! foolish thing, why fly out into darkness from the descended king of day? Why not ride on with the vessel following his westward way? Wise bird, speed on! If thousands of miles behind you light on another mast or on a tree upon the eastern shore, you'll greet his rising and return hours before a single ray will reach the ship you have left. Well, as one by one our brightest earthly hopes go down from the sight of our watching, weeping eyes, do we learn to turn our faces to the better land we left behind us when we wandered out from God—where the light of an eternal day the sooner will greet us, and whose sun shall no more go down? Are we laying up for ourselves treasures in Heaven, and do we feel our faith flying up each hour on joyful wing to find again its own? Brethren, for one who sees the king in his beauty and the land that is afar off, whose eye catches glimpses and lights up with the gleams

of the glory beyond, there are multitudes who look out only into the gloomy night of earthly death and the blackness of eternal despair. For one who, like Jesus, with soul fixed on the vision of joys set before him, and gives not up by the way, but grandly finishes his life-work, there are hundreds looking down into the dust where flesh and spirit fail them, and are crushed by the crosses and burdens they bear before they carry them half-way up the hill. Through such a world the Saviour has sent us to preach his gospel of life and immortality ; to give to human hearts a hope which shall sustain them to the last ; to tell them of expectations which have God himself for their origin and end—of a faith which has his own everlasting Son as its author and finisher, and whose fruits the believing soul shall just begin to gather when all earthly things shall perish and time shall be no more.

THE PRESENT LIFE AS RELATED TO THE FUTURE.

BY REV. WILLIAM G. T. SHEDD, D.D.

"But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."—LUKE xvi. 25.

THE reader of Dante's *Inferno* is always struck with the sincerity and realism of that poem. Under the delineation of that luminous, and that intense understanding, hell has a topographic reality. We wind along down those nine circles as down a volcanic crater, black, jagged, precipitous, and impressing upon the senses at every step. The sighs and shrieks are our own tympanum; and the convulsions of the lost excite emotions in our own nerves. No wonder that the children in the streets of Florence, as they saw the sad and earnest man passing, his face lined with passion and his brow scarred with thought, pointed at him, and said, "There goes the man who has been in hell." But how infinitely more solemn is the impression that is made by these thirteen short verses of the fifteenth chapter of Luke's gospel from the lips of such a being as Jesus Christ! We have here the terse and pregnant teachings of one who, in the phrase of the early Creed, not only "descended into hell," but who "hath the keys of death and hell." We have here not the utterances of the most truthful and the most earnest of all human poets—a man, who, we may

believe, felt deeply the power of the Hebrew Bible, though living in a dark age, and a superstitious Church—we have here the utterances of the Son of God, very God of very God, and we may be certain that he intended to convey no impression that will not be made good in the world to come. And when every eye shall see him, and all the sinful kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him, there will not be any eye that can look into his, and say, “Thy description, O Son of God! was overdrawn; the impression was greater than the reality.” On the contrary, every human soul will say in the day of judgment, We were forewarned; the statements were exact; “even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath” (Psa. xc. 11).

But what is the lesson which we are to read by this clear and solemn light? What would our merciful Redeemer have us learn from this passage which he has caused to be recorded for our instruction? Let us listen with a candid and a feeling heart, because it comes to us not from an enemy of the human soul, not from a being who delights to cast it into hell, but from a friend of the soul; because it comes to us from one who, in his own person and in his own flesh, suffered an anguish superior in dignity and equal in cancelling power to the pains of all the hells, in order that we, through repentance and faith, might be spared their infliction.

The lesson is this: The man who seeks enjoyment in this life, as his chief end, must suffer in the next life; and he who endures suffering in this life, for righteousness' sake, shall be happy in the next. “Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”

It is a fixed principle in the Divine administration, that the scales of justice shall in the end be made equal. If, therefore, sin enjoys in this world, it must sorrow in the next; and if righteousness sorrows in this world, it must enjoy in the next. The experience shall be reversed, in order to bring everything to a right position and adjustment. This is everywhere taught in the Bible. “Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received

your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh" (Luke vi. 21, 24, 25). These are the explicit declarations of the founder of Christianity, and they ought not to surprise us, coming as they do from him who expressly declares that his kingdom is not of this world; that in this world his disciples must have tribulation, as he had; that through much tribulation they must enter into the kingdom of God; that whosoever doth not take up the cross daily, and follow him, cannot be his disciple.

Let us notice some particulars in which we see the operation of this principle. What are the "good things," which Dives receives here, for which he must be "tormented" hereafter? and what are the "evil things," which Lazarus receives in this world, for which he will be "comforted" in the world to come?

1. In the first place, the worldly man derives a more intense physical enjoyment from this world's goods than does the child of God. He possesses more of them, and gives himself up to them without self-restraint. The majority of those who have been most prospered by Divine Providence in the accumulation of wealth have been outside of the kingdom and the ark of God. Not many rich and not many noble are called. In the past history of mankind the great possessions and the great incomes, as a general rule, have not been in the hands of humble and penitent men. In the great centres of trade and commerce—in Venice, Amsterdam, Paris, London—it is the world, and not the people of God, who have had the purse, and have borne what is put therein. Satan is described in Scripture as the "prince of this world" (John xiv. 30); and his words addressed to the Son of God are true: "All this power and glory is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will, I give it." In the parable from which we are discoursing, the sinful man was the rich man, and the child of God was the beggar. And how often

do we see, in every-day life, a faithful, prayerful, upright, and pure-minded man toiling in poverty, and, so far as earthly comforts are concerned, enjoying little or nothing ; while a selfish, pleasure-seeking, and profligate man is immersed in physical comforts and luxuries ! The former is receiving evil things, and the latter is receiving good things, in this life.

Again, how often it happens that a fine physical constitution, health, strength, and vigour, are given to the worldling, and are denied to the child of God. The possession of worldly good is greatly enhanced in value by a fine capability of enjoying it. When, therefore, we see wealth joined with health, and luxury in all the surroundings and appointments combined with taste to appreciate them, and a full flow of blood to enjoy them, or access to wide and influential circles, in politics and fashion, given to one who is well fitted by personal qualities to move in them—when we see a happy adaptation existing between the man and his good fortune, as we call it—we see not only the “good things,” but the “good things” in their gayest and most attractive forms and colours. And how often is all this observed in the instance of the natural man, and how often is there little or none of this in the instance of the spiritual man ! We by no means imply that it is impossible for the possessor of this world’s goods to love mercy, to do justly, and to walk humbly ; and we are well aware that under the garb of poverty and toil there may beat a murmuring and rebellious heart. But we think that from generation to generation, in this imperfect and probationary world, it will be found to be a fact, that when merely earthly and physical good is allotted in large amounts by the providence of God—that when great incomes and ample means of luxury are given—in the majority of instances they are given to the enemies of God, and not to his dear children. So the Psalmist seems to have thought : “I was envious,” he says, “when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death : but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men ; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride

compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. Behold, these are the *ungodly*, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily *I* have cleansed my heart in vain and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have *I* been plagued, and chastened every morning" (Psalm lxxiii.) And it should be carefully noticed that the Psalmist, even after further reflection, does not alter his statement respecting the relative positions of the godly and the ungodly in this world. He sees no reason to correct his estimate upon this point. He lets it stand. So far as this merely physical existence is concerned, the wicked man has the advantage. It is only when the Psalmist looks beyond this life that he sees the compensation, and the balancing again of the scales of eternal right and justice. "When I thought to know this"—when I reflected upon this inequality and apparent injustice in the treatment of the friends and the enemies of God—"it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God"—until I took my stand in the eternal world, and formed my estimate there—"then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors." Dives passes from his fine linen and sumptuous fare, from his excessive physical enjoyment, to everlasting perdition.

2. In the second place, the worldly man derives more enjoyment from sin, and suffers less from it, in this life, than does the child of God. The really renewed man cannot enjoy sin. It is true that he does sin, owing to the strength of old habits, and the remainders of his corruption. But he does not really delight in it; and he says with St. Paul, "What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." His sin is a sorrow, a constant sorrow, to him. He feels its pressure and burden all his days, and cries, "O wretched man, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" If he falls into it, he cannot live in it; as a man may fall into water, but it is not his natural element.

Again, the good man not only takes no real delight in sin, but his reflections after transgression are very painful. He has a tender conscience. His senses have been trained and disciplined to discern good and evil. Hence, the sins that are committed by a child of God are mourned over with a very deep sorrow. The longer he lives, the more odious does sin become to him, and the more keen and bitter is his lamentation over it. Now this, in itself, is an "evil thing." Man was not made for sorrow, and sorrow is not his natural condition. This wearisome struggle with indwelling corruption, these reproaches of an impartial conscience, this sense of imperfection and of constant failure in the service of God,—all this renders the believer's life on earth a season of trial and tribulation. The thought of its lasting for ever would be painful to him; and if he should be told that it is the will of God that he should continue to be vexed and foiled through all eternity with the motions of sin in his members, and that his love and obedience would be for ever imperfect, though he would be thankful that even this was granted him, and that he was not utterly cast off, yet he would wear a shaded brow at the prospect of an imperfect, though a sincere and a struggling, eternity.

But the ungodly are not so. The worldly man loves sin—loves pleasure, loves self—and the love is so strong, and accompanied with so much enjoyment and zest, that it is lust, and is so denominated in the Bible. And if you would only defend him from the wrath of God; if you would warrant him immunity in doing as he likes; if you could shelter him as in an inaccessible castle from the retributions of eternity; with what a delirium of pleasure would he plunge into the sin that he loves! Tell the avaricious man that his avarice shall never have any evil consequences here or hereafter, and with what an energy would he apply himself to the acquisition of wealth! Tell the luxurious man, full of passion and full of blood, that his pleasures shall never bring down any evil upon him, that there is no power in the universe that can hurt him, and with *what an abandonment* would he surrender himself to his carnal

elysium ! Tell the ambitious man, fired with visions of fame and glory, that he may banish all fears of a final account, that he may make himself his own Deity, and breathe in the incense of worshippers, without any rebuke from him who says, "I am God, and my glory I will not give to another,"—assure the proud and ambitious man that his sin will never find him out, and with what a momentum will he follow out his inclination ! For in each of these instances there is a hankering and a lust. The sin is loved and revelled in for its own deliciousness. The heart is worldly, and therefore finds its pleasure in its forbidden objects and aims. The instant you propose to check or thwart this inclination ; the instant you try to detach this natural heart from its wealth, or its pleasure, or its earthly fame ; you discover how closely it clings, and how strongly it loves, and how intensely it enjoys the forbidden object. Like the greedy insect in our gardens, it has fed until every fibre and tissue are coloured with its food ; and to remove it from the leaf is to tear and lacerate it.

Now it is for this reason that the natural man receives "good things," or experiences pleasure, in this life at a point where the spiritual man receives "evil things," or experiences pain. The child of God does not relish and enjoy sin in this style. Sin in the good man is a burden ; but in the bad man it is a pleasure. It is all the pleasure he has. And when you propose to take it away from him, or when you ask him to give it up of his own accord, he looks at you and asks, "Will you take away the only solace I have ? I have no joy in God. I take no enjoyment in divine things. Do you ask me to make myself wholly miserable ?"

And not only does the natural man enjoy sin, but, in this life, he is much less troubled than is the spiritual man with reflections and self-reproaches on account of sin. This is another of the "good things" which Dives receives, for which he must be "tormented ;" and this is another of the "evil things" which Lazarus receives, for which he must be "comforted." It cannot be denied that in this world the child of God suffers more

mental sorrow for sin, in a given period of time, than does the insensible man of the world. If we could look into the soul of a faithful disciple of Christ, we should discover that not a day passes in which his conscience does not reproach him for sins of thought, word, or deed; in which he does not struggle with some bosom sin, until he is so weary that he cries out, "Oh! that I had wings like a dove, so that I might fly away, and be at rest." Some of the most exemplary members of the Church go mourning from day to day because their hearts are still so far from their God and Saviour, and their lives fall so far short of what they desire them to be. Their experience is not a positively wretched one, like that of an unforgiven sinner when he is feeling the stings of conscience. They are forgiven. The expiating blood has soothed the ulcerated conscience, so that it no longer stings and burns. They have hope in God's mercy. Still they are in grief and sorrow for sin; and their experience, in so far, is not a perfectly happy one, such as will ultimately be their portion in a better world. "If in this life only," says St. Paul, "we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (1 Cor. xv. 19).

But the stupid and impenitent man, a luxurious Dives, knows nothing of all this. His days glide by with no twinges of conscience. What does he know of the burden of sin? His conscience is dead asleep; perchance seared as with a hot iron. He does wrong without any remorse; he disobeys the express commands of God, without any misgivings or self-reproach. He is "alive, without the law,"—as St. Paul expresses it. His eyes stand out with fatness; and his heart, in the Psalmist's phrase, "is as fat as grease" (Psa. cxix. 70). There is no religious sensibility in him. His sin is a pleasure to him without any mixture of sorrow, because unattended by any remorse of conscience. He is receiving his "good things" in this life. His days pass by without any moral anxiety, and perchance, as he looks upon some meek and earnest disciple of Christ who is battling with indwelling sin, and who, therefore, sometimes wears a grave countenance, he wonders that any one

should walk so soberly, so gloomily, in such a cheery, such a happy, such a jolly world as this.

It is a startling fact that those men in this world who have most reason to be distressed by sin are the least troubled by it; and those who have the least reason to be distressed by sin are the most troubled by it. The child of God is the one who sorrows most, and the child of Satan is the one who sorrows least. Remember that we are speaking only of this life. The text reads, "Thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things." And it is unquestionably so. The meek and lowly disciple of Christ—the one who is most entitled by his character and conduct to be untroubled by religious anxiety—is the very one who bows his head as a bulrush, and, perhaps, goes mourning all his days, fearing that he is not accepted, and that he shall be a cast-a-way; while the selfish and thoroughly irreligious man, who ought to be stung through and through by his own conscience, and feel the full energy of the law which he is continually breaking—this man, who of all men ought to be anxious and distressed for sin, goes through a whole lifetime, perchance, without any convictions or any fears.

And now we ask if this state of things ought to last for ever? Is it right, is it just, that sin should enjoy in this style for ever and for ever, and that holiness should grieve and sorrow in this style for evermore? Would you have the Almighty pay a bounty upon unrighteousness, and place goodness under eternal pains and penalties? Ought not this state of things to be reversed? When Dives comes to the end of this lifetime; when he has run his round of earthly pleasure, faring sumptuously every day, clothed in purple and fine linen, without a thought of his duties and obligations, and without any anxiety and penitence for his sins—when this worldly man has received all his "good things," and is satiated and hardened by them, ought he not then to be "tormented?" Ought this guilty, carnal enjoyment to be perpetuated through all eternity, under the government of a righteous and just God? And, on

the other hand, ought not the faithful disciple, who, perhaps, has possessed little or nothing of this world's goods—who has toiled hard in poverty, in affliction, in temptation, in tribulation, and sometimes, like Abraham, in the horror of a great darkness, to keep his robes white and his soul unspotted from the world—when the poor and weary Lazarus comes to the end of his lifetime, ought not his trials and sorrows to cease? Ought he not then to be “comforted” in the bosom of Abraham, in the paradise of God? There is that within us all which answers, Yea, and Amen. Such a balancing of the scales is assented to, and demanded by the moral convictions. Hence, in the parable, Dives himself is represented as acquiescing in the eternal judgment. He does not complain of injustice. It is true that at first he asks for a drop of water—for some slight mitigation of his punishment. This is the instinctive request of any sufferer. But when his attention is directed to the right and the wrong of the case, when Abraham reminds him of the principles of justice by which his destiny has been decided, when he tells him that having taken his choice of pleasure in the world which he has left he cannot now have pleasure in the world to which he has come, the wretched man makes no reply. There is nothing to be said. He feels that the procedure is just. He is then silent upon the subject of his own tortures, and only begs that his five brethren, whose lifetime is not yet run out, to whom there is still a space left for repentance, may be warned from his own lips not to do as he has done—not to choose pleasure on earth as their chief good, not to take their “good things” in this life. Dives, the man in hell, is a witness to the justice of eternal punishment.

1. In view of this subject, as thus discussed, we remark, in the first place, that no man can have his “good things”—in other words, his chief pleasure—in *both* worlds. God and this world are in antagonism. “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. If any man love the world, the *love of the Father* is not in him” (1 John i. 15, 16). It is the

height of folly, therefore, to suppose that a man can make earthly enjoyment his chief end while he is upon earth, and then pass to heaven when he dies. Just so far as he holds on upon the "good things" of this life, he relaxes his grasp upon the "good things" of the next. No man is capacious enough to hold both worlds in his embrace. He cannot serve God and Mammon. Look at this as a *matter of fact*. Do not take it as a theory of the preacher. It is as plain and certain that you cannot lay up your treasure in heaven while you are laying it up upon earth, as it is that your material bodies cannot occupy two portions of space at one and the same time. Dismiss, therefore, all expectations of being able to accomplish an impossibility. Put not your mind to sleep with the opiate that in some inexplicable manner you will be able to live the life of a worldly man upon earth, and then the life of a spiritual man in heaven. There is no alchemy that can amalgamate substances that refuse to mix. No man has ever yet succeeded, no man ever will succeed, in securing both the pleasures of sin and the pleasures of holiness—in living the life of Dives, and then going to the bosom of Abraham.

2. And this leads to the second remark, that every man must *make his choice* whether he will have his "good things" now, or hereafter. Every man is making his choice. Every man has already made it. The heart is now set either upon God, or upon the world. Search through the globe, and you cannot find a creature with double affections; a creature with two chief ends of living; a creature whose treasure is both upon earth and in heaven. All mankind are single-minded. They either mind earthly things, or heavenly things. They are inspired with one predominant purpose, which rules them, determines their character, and decides their destiny. And in all who have not been renewed by Divine grace, the purpose is a wrong one, a false and a fatal one. It is the choice and the purpose of Dives, and not the choice and purpose of Lazarus.

3. Hence we remark, in the third place, that it is the duty and the wisdom of every man to let this world go, and seek his "good things" hereafter. Our Lord commands every man to

sit down, like the steward in the parable, and make an estimate. He enjoins it upon every man to reckon up the advantages upon each side, and see for himself which is superior. He asks every man what it will profit him "if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or what he shall give in exchange for his soul." We urge you to make this estimate, to compare the "good things" which Dives enjoyed, with the "torments" that followed them; and the "evil things" which Lazarus suffered, with the "comfort" that succeeded them. There can be no doubt upon which side the balance will fall. And we urge you to take the "evil things" now, and the "good things" hereafter. We entreat you to copy the example of Moses at the court of the Pharaohs, and in the midst of all regal luxury, who "chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of reward." Take the narrow way. What though it be strait and narrow?—you are not to walk in it for ever. A few short years of fidelity will end the toilsome pilgrimage, and then you will come out into a "wealthy place." We might tell you of the joys of the Christian life that are mingled with its trials and sorrows even here upon earth; for this race to which we invite you, and this fight to which we call you, have their own peculiar, solemn, substantial joy. And even their sorrow is tinged with glory. In a higher, truer sense than Protesilaus in the poem says it of the pagan elysium, we may say even of the Christian race and the Christian fight,

"Calm pleasures there abide—majestic pains."

But we do not care, at this point, to influence you by a consideration of the amount of enjoyment in this life which you will derive from a close and humble walk with God. We prefer to put the case in its baldest form—in the aspect in which we find it in our text. We will say nothing at all about the happiness of a Christian life here in time. We will talk *only of its tribulations*. We will only say, as in the parable,

that there are "evil things" to be endured here upon earth, in return for which we shall have "good things" in another life. There is to be a moderate and sober use of this world's goods; there is to be a searching sense of sin, and an humble confession of it before God; there is to be a cross-bearing every day, and a straggle with indwelling corruption. These will cost effort, watchfulness, and earnest prayer for Divine assistance. We do not invite you into the kingdom of God without telling you frankly and plainly beforehand what must be done and what must be suffered. But having told you this, we then tell you, with the utmost confidence and assurance, that you will be infinitely repaid for your choice if you take your "evil things" in this life, and choose your "good things" in a future. We know and are certain that this light affliction which endures but for a moment, in comparison with the infinite duration beyond the tomb, will work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. We entreat you to look no longer at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things that are seen are temporal, but the things that are not seen are eternal.

Learn a parable from a wounded soldier. His limb must be amputated, for mortification and gangrene have begun their work. He is told that the surgical operation, which will last a half-hour, will yield him twenty or forty years of healthy and active life. The endurance of an "evil thing" for a few moments will result in the possession of a "good thing" for many long days and years. He holds out the limb and submits to the knife. He accepts the inevitable conditions under which he finds himself. He is resolute and stern, in order to secure a great good in the future.

It is the practice of this same principle, though not in the use of the same kind of power, that we would urge upon you. Look up to God for grace and help, and deliberately forego a present advantage, for the sake of something infinitely more valuable hereafter. Do not, for the sake of the temporary enjoyment of *Dives*, lose the eternal happiness of *Lazarus*.

Rather take the place and accept the "evil things" of the beggar. Look up to God for grace and strength to do it, and then live a life of contrition for sin, and faith in Christ's blood. Deny yourself, and take up the cross daily. Expect your happiness hereafter. Lay up your treasure above. Then, in the deciding day, it will be said of you, as it will be of all the true children of God, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Vintage Gleanings from the American Pulpit.

There are two very common and erroneous estimates of Christ's character. One makes him simply human, robs him of his divinity, his diadems, unthrones him in his own church, reduces him to the level of humanity. The opposing tendency is to look upon him as only divine. The beholder is lost in admiration—awed at his majesty and glory! Neither of these conceptions apart is right—only blended are they true. We must bring the soul to the great mediatorial scheme in Christ which God has appointed for the salvation of the world.

Nothing can be more unwise than to train children so that no temptation shall come nigh them. Thus educated they grow up into moral imbecility. Hence it has been said that the greatest reprobates have come from families whose heads were the greatest saints. The sooner children are hardened by meeting and resisting evil, the better for them and for all around them. And when severe temptations come, as come they will, they can meet them like men and women. If accustomed to resist for themselves, they become strong, resolute, heroic, holy.

Look at that law which regulates the appetites and passions. Have you not been flying between one thing and another, like a shuttlecock between two battledores, and can you say you have carried out all the law? Consider what are your obligations to children, to your home, to hard-hearted men, to soft-hearted men, to mean people; for Noah's ark is here yet, and we have got every living thing in it.

The philosophy of Christ's life was different from the common philosophy of life. That philosophy says, "Get, amass wealth, and lay hold on all you can." Christ's philosophy says, "Give, scatter broadcast, and relieve the suffering of your fellow-creatures." The world considers that man successful who acquires wealth; but, according to Christ, he who gives achieves the greatest success. He lived and died by that grand principle, and we should profit by his example.

The spiritual work to which we are called is often referred to as corresponding to the labour of the husbandman. The work of sowing the truth, and reaping for the Lord, is still going on, and we are all divinely appointed to take part in the religious culture of the world. The call is not alone to men in high places, the Spurgeons and Van Meters, to the great leaders in the cause of Christ—the privilege is not limited to them, but extends to every soul in the kingdom of God. When Tribonius met his pupils he always lifted his hat, and when asked why he showed them so much courtesy replied, “How do I know but that some of them may yet shake the world?”

In order to apprehend and appreciate any object, it is necessary that we look at it from a right point of view. If we look at a picture, great and celebrated, so that the light reflected from its surface is obscure and indistinct, we shall see only a maze of colour, without method, or beauty, or genius. But looked at from a proper standpoint, the portrait appears upon the canvas fixed for centuries, and bright with the noble and beautiful spirit which animated it when living, and teaching perpetual lessons of strength and beauty. So a statue close at hand seems roughly wrought, but when lifted to its niche in the cathedral wall its beautiful appearance is produced by the harshness of its treatment, while more delicacy would have destroyed it. A palace or cathedral beheld from a mountain top seems distorted, and its majesty dwindles; but in the square in which it stands its proportions are wholly revealed. So with character. In order to rightly estimate one who is great in civil or military life, in philosophical inquiry, or theological research, we must place ourselves beside him and in the age in which he lived; we must see how many beneficent enterprises he assisted, and how many injurious ones he arrested. To appreciate him properly, we must not project our own observation into the past and make it our model and measure, but should consider rather what results flowed from his ministry in life.

THE KINGDOM OF PEACE.

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

"Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world."—JOHN xviii. 36.

FROM these words of Christ I desire to draw some inferences related to the text not by logic so much as by suggestion. The fact that the kingdom of God is not an ordinary kingdom, but a peculiar one, suggests the importance of inquiring into this special empire among empires.

Let us first recall the idea of kingdom, and see what are the elements contained in that word. It includes the two notions, that of power vested in a house or an individual, and that of the land, large or small, over which this power extends. The kingdom of Cyrus, in its moral form, included a sway over the property and service of men many millions strong, and in its material form extended from the Indus to the Ægean. Thus the moment you pronounce the word kingdom, there comes before your mind a large throng of people, perhaps enslaved like the subjects of Xerxes or Solomon, perhaps blest with more liberty, like the citizens of England; and then comes the other idea of a domain that reaches out in each direction a thousand or half a thousand miles. An old king defined his empire as reaching north to where none could dwell on account of the cold, and south to where on account of the heat few could find homes; and there is existing an empire which boasts of a domain upon which the sun never sets.

These remarks will recall to us the two ideas carried along by

the word "kingdom:" the idea of moral power swayed by somebody, and of a wide land where this power rests for the joy or grief of the citizens. When the great Leader of men, Christ, came, it was expected by his disciples that he would at once set up such a two-fold kingdom, one over the souls and bodies of men, and reaching from sea to sea and from the rivers to the ends of the earth. The disciples had read literally the promises regarding a Christ, and as there are those who now expect the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and those who expect the third part of the stars to fall from heaven, so there were those once who thought Christ had come to displace the Cæsars, and group the states of earth into one state, and melt all crowns into one. Into the midst of such thoughts, into the midst of such gloomy hopes kindled in the long injustice of the past centuries, the new Guide from the skies was compelled by truth to throw the no doubt cold words, that "his kingdom was not of the world." If reason and the heart were permitted to express their regrets in matters so far beyond their measurement, one might almost weep that such a being as Christ could not there and then have become king of such a state as imagination, taught in the long school of bondage, had pictured for him—a state ruled in peace and wisdom, and co-extensive with the world. But such a result would have been to set aside by miracle the long career of man, the long experiment, the long self-education of the human race. Abandoning all reflections as to what might have been, we return to the simple fact that there is a "kingdom of God, not of this world." It is not as visible, indeed, as the government which moves to and fro on earth, clanking chains alternately of white and black, and reveals not such definite limits as those which separate England from France, or which cut off America from the great family of nations; but, however obscure in its action and boundaries, the kingdom of God certainly envelopes us, and offers its shores to our feet and its atmosphere to our daily life.

From the fact that God is Designer and then Creator of the world, and is the whole Alpha and Omega of its great assem-

blage of life and intelligence, we must infer that he is King also of all we see or hear or may dream of in our thought. From Creator he at once passes to the title of King. If you will reflect for a moment, you will confess that the diadem of all the great monarchs who have existed upon earth, all the pomp and power between Solomon and Louis XIV., have been only weakness, only crowns of dust, compared with the imperial sway of the great King of kings.

But this kingdom of God assumes two forms: a form of fate, which no one can escape; and, secondly, a form of home or fatherland, which one may joyfully seek and joyfully find. All the human family are unavoidably in the empire of God. It presses in closely around every soul of every character and place. Into this dominion of God all are born, and from it no one can exile himself, however ardently he may desire it. An old Greek said, "If a man does wrong, he may escape the government of man, but not the power of God, for," he continues, "I know of no darkness that will hide from him, no fortified place that will shield from his attack, no swiftness that will carry one away from his presence." Into this dominion we are all born, equally, and hence this cannot be that kingdom of God of which the Saviour speaks. He speaks not of that empire which as a fate envelopes all who come into this being, but must be speaking of a kingdom where those who love and serve God are received into a great friendship and liberty and life. He speaks not of an iron destiny, which surrounds all mortals, but of a special empire, into which God would, through him, gather those who should love and obey him. All the universe is, indeed, God's kingdom, but there will be an *imperium in imperio*, a fatherland for the loving children in this vale. There is a nation of which the most perfect state here is but a shadow.

Let us recall some of the points of difference between this kingdom and the ordinary states of men. It is not of this world in its great central bond, for the bond of human government was force in those days when the Saviour disavowed all resem-

blance. The sword had made those vast assemblages called nations, and the sword was the trusted preserver of thrones. In the spirit of such surroundings the Jews could not realize that Jesus had come in any other character than that of a mighty conqueror, and it is no doubt true that the disciples expected their Master to rise in power and blight their enemies, as he had cursed a fig tree or had made the sea obey him. Peter had actually drawn his sword, supposing the time of conquest had come; and it is said in defence of Judas that he may have thought Christ would utterly destroy his enemies, and while Judas should enjoy the silver, Christ would ascend a throne. Little did they all dream that an empire of soul was coming through their Lord, an empire which should eclipse for ever the sway of Solomon and Xerxes, and even the splendour of Pericles. A state was to be then and there marked out into which men should rise, not by the power of the strongest battalions, not by the catapult and ballista which were about to attack Jerusalem, not by changing the bed of a river and thus reducing a Babylon, but by a spiritual ascent in which armies should count nothing, but the soul everything. Instead of ship, and chariots, and spears, and bloody battle-fields, the equipments of this new state were to be brotherly love, equality, purity of heart, faith, hope, and charity. Christ was the great first step in the fulfilment of the dreamed-of time when swords should be beaten into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks.

No human empire in the world's long history has been satisfactory to any thoughtful mind or humane heart. There is in them all too much of poverty, too much of ignorance, too much of despotism, too much vanity of rulers and sorrow of the poor, and too brief a human life. The boasted light and tenderness of our century have not yet transformed nations into anything like homes for the multitude. In Europe every nation is to-day increasing the size of its armies, and is each night dreaming of new and gigantic wars. Unable to furnish happy and peaceful *homes to their citizens*, they feel fully able to promise tombs to

millions of men in the flower of their years. The jealousy, the vanity of power which led Hannibal and Cæsar all through their tumultuous and bloody years, reign in the human bosom still, and the humility of human nature which made that Roman chief stand responsible for the death of one million two hundred thousand human beings stained Napoleon with the blood of a half million men eighteen hundred years afterward. And the blood poured out upon battlefields is only a poor expression of the sorrow of human states; for war is occasional, but the wretchedness of poverty and of ignorance and the vice coming from the injustice of the long past are constant—a war in which there has yet been no discharge.

How grand the words of Christ when, looking upon such a scene, he declared his kingdom to be something different—it was not of this world. Oh! what a scene it would be could we remove the thick veil which hides from us the far-off future of earth, and which shuts out Heaven, and see a kingdom of virtue, of faith, hope, and charity, of education and Christianity and immortality complete, rising up out of this earth, desecrated so long by the bloody footsteps of military heroes and ambitious kings. But just such a transfiguration scene does Christianity contemplate. As God evoked this beautiful earth from a chaos; as he entered into the old geologic ages, where storms beat incessantly for a thousand years, and where great brutes battled for mastery—entered in love, and disentangled the sunshine from the storm, and made a sweet blue sky span prairies covered with flowers, and ordered the vast brute world to perish to make room for laughing school children—so once again is he entering the chaos of nations, and is making an empire of soul and mind evolve itself from the midst of this din of arms and this vaunting ambition. As the bright-coloured roses spring from a dark, unseemly root, hidden in plain, brown earth, so, in the economy of the same Creator, there is growing up out of the kingdoms of men an empire of the human mind, where the consciousness of culture and *love and honour will be a sweeter crown than was ever gained*

where the chariot rolled or where the sword flashed in the sun.

Men in their sober moments confess that there is no kingdom but the kingdom of righteousness. They know that all our empires are nothing but protections against crime and all forms of dishonour. They are built to shelter us from the iron hail of other states. They are not food, but only medicine, given not for happiness, but because we are ill. When the statesman or poet sits down to paint the picture of an ideal country, he at once tears up the book of history and speaks from the holy heights of the soul.

“What constitutes a state?
Not high-raised battlement or laboured mound,
Thick wall, or moated gate;
Not cities proud, with spires and turrets crowned;
Not bays and broad-armed ports
Where, laughi ng at the storm, rich navies ride;
Not starred and spangled courts.”

It is men, it is the mind and spirit, that can alone make up a society that offers any happiness of being and any arena of action. There is an empire of soul coming, led along by the kind, strong hand of God.

Here and there in all ages, citizens have appeared who belonged to this new empire. They perceived the great outline of this new world as traced by the finger of Christ, and into its beautiful confines they joyfully stepped. When Saul held the clothes of those who stoned Stephen, he was fully in the confines of the old dynasty. That act was what any Herod and Nero and any Indian chief would have done. That, upon a larger scale, was what had been done from Cyrus to Bonaparte. But when Paul passed over a certain spiritual boundary, and, weeping over the memory of the martyr, he began to persuade Jew and Gentile up to the “higher life,” persuade not by the sword, but by human love and entreaty, his feet touched then *the grand kingdom of the Almighty.*

Thus looking over history you may see here and there indivi-

duals stepping over into the empire that is not of this world. It ought to be true that you could see the whole church in all times, everywhere, moving along in this path of spiritual power, wholly declining to wear the attributes of this world. But the ignorance and depravity of man have denied you and me the beauty and impressiveness of such a picture, and along has come the church with the gospel of Jesus in one hand and the fagot and torch in the other. The blood that has been shed in the name of political or scientific truth has been but a few drops compared with the mighty stream that has flowed down from the fields of religion. Instead of remaining such a sweet persuasion up into a higher life, as it set forth from the eloquent tongue of Christ and his apostles, it early grasped the sword again, and for eighteen centuries has advanced, half Christian and half savage, as though the thumbscrew and the rack could be made companions of the spirituality and tenderness of Jesus. Had the Christian church grasped at once the import of Christ's kingdom, that it was nothing but an entreaty, a movement from force to friendship, not a love of empire, but a love of man; had it sought only the glory of virtue and faith and hope, as Christ and Paul sought them, it is probable that not now would there be an army in any nation, nor a ship of war floating in any harbour. Completely would the kingdom of mind and soul have eclipsed the kingdom of spear and gun. It was the misfortune of Christianity, that as soon as its divine Christ was in his tomb it began to attach itself to the poor human nature, and in some wretched manner to form a partnership between the Sermon on the Mount and the cross-bows of the tenth century and the gunpowder of the thirteenth. Had the church only taught the ignorant, and only repeated everywhere the simple story of Christ; had it visited the sick and talked with the well; had it confined itself to its hymn and prayer, its cross of atonement and crown of virtue; had it, when thrones were offered, said, "My kingdom is not of that kind and quality," what a glory would have gathered about her altars!—a glory that would have made the night of the dark ages impossible. It was

the union of gospel and empire that set the cross back a thousand years. The early bishops were all generals, and the succession from St. Peter and the succession from Julius Cæsar followed along in parallel paths, and the hands that were laid on the ministry in the holy baptism of water, were laid on, also, in a baptism of blood; and from each school of theology men came forth ordained equally for prayer and for slaughter, combining in one person the office of inquisitor of the innocent and preacher of Jesus Christ.

No one dares look back and affirm positively what might, could, would, or should have been, for God only knows what was best and shall be best; but looking as far as our limited powers may, we cannot but conclude that had this single principle of Jesus, that his kingdom was not of this world, been written over the church from the outset, the massacre of St. Bartholomew would have been kept from the page of history, and even the story of Servetus and Calvin would be transformed into one like that of Jesus and Nicodemus, where, in the quiet evening, two hearts talked together about the way of eternal life. Christ threatened no fagots in that hour, but the two souls communed together and parted in such a love that, when the Blessed One lay dead, the rabbi came to the tomb to pay his offerings of spices to a being to whom he could no longer offer words of reverence and gratitude.

We who are living to-day may look now at these words which define the empire of Christ, and learn their blessed import; for we are dull students, indeed, if from the terrific past in which the church has tried all forms of force and cruelty—tried it as a nation, tried it as individuals—we cannot elaborate the meaning of the words that Christ's empire is not an image of those states that lay in such vanity around the cradle and tomb of Jesus. The ante-Roman Church warns us, for it battled with the barbarians instead of teaching them. It went forth as a bandit rather than as a kind schoolmaster. The *Roman Church* warns us, the politico-church everywhere warns us, for everywhere it has brought in a harvest of power, a crop

of bondage and sorrow, but not of culture, and piety, and happiness. When our religious teachers wish you and me to think well of the church, they conceal from us its vast political history, and point out to us some A'Kempis saying his prayers, or some Xavier pleading with the savages about Christ. Questioned closely, the Catholic explains away the massacre of Bartholomew, and the Calvinist explains away the death of Servetus, or derides those who allude to such events; but all this explanation and derision come from hearts not wholly free from the inhumanity that once did all those disgraceful deeds, and cautions the world at once not only against the old religious empires, but against those who will still weave apologies for so much barbarism.

All the past seems now to come up toward us—comes in its confession of cruelty as Paul confessed with grief his “consenting” to Stephen’s death, and whispers at times, and at times shouts to us, that the kingdom of Jesus is not like the kingdom of this world.

Into other kingdoms men are born or may remove, but into this men are reborn by a Divine Spirit; they are led into it by a Son of God and of man. Its gates are not the Mediterranean, which once bore the human family from Carthage to Rome, and from Alexandria to Athens; not the gates of the Baltic which leads the wanderers home to the North lands; not the great highway of the Atlantic, which leads to where fifty millions rejoice in a republic; of this new divine land, the only gateway is the soul. Through that alone, adorned by faith in Jesus Christ, and attended by a choir of virtues, man enters and becomes a citizen. Into this flowery empire the heart comes by the voice of invitation. Education invites, Christ invites, friends invite, reflection invites, and to these kind voices the grave and the mystery beyond join their eloquence. It is not a fatality, but a choice.

This kingdom not only wholly repudiates all force and stands without any soldiers except those of the cross, and without any arms except truth, and hymns, and prayer; also it excludes all littleness of *idea and of conduct*, and is marked in all its out-

lines by the greatness of God. Humanity may come and try to write upon this realm some of its earthly words, and may attempt to make it not so much a nation of the infinite God as their own churchyard or narrow world, just as Dante made Heaven in the likeness of terraces of Italy; but we know that from the broad face of this upper state the marks of man will be erased, and the greatness of God and the greatness of the soul will be written all over it. All human littleness will remain here, just as when the spirit goes to Heaven it leaves in the tomb its dust.

My friends, confess the existence of two kingdoms as lying around you this day—or, since your heart has in this era of liberty learned to love the term better, two republics—one of America, one of God. All the voices of men speaking from the grief of bondage and kingcraft announce the one; Jesus Christ, speaking in the name of a glorious liberty of the soul, announces the other. Make of the republic of man only the flight of marble steps to lead you to the kingdom of Heaven. Remember the gateways to this spiritual land, and remember that you and your friends must enter it, not by violence, but by invitation. Plead with them and with your own souls.

Oh, great and glorious fatherland of us all! Its grand boundaries encircle all the little realms of earth. France, Germany, England, America, all lie within it like islands in a vast sea; and those long years in which the temples of Greece and the gardens of Persia have crumbled, lie like dewdrops upon the morning fringe of that upper day. Soon to each of you this kingdom here, reaching from Atlantic to Pacific, will, in all its whole extent, furnish you only a tomb among its high mountains or low prairie flowers, and then you will need that "kingdom not of this world." When the confines of this nation shall fade from sight, may the great boundaries of Christ's empire, that of the soul, suddenly spring up, and by its waving white banner of love, betray the land of happiness and endless life.

THE RESURECTION OF CHRIST.

BY REV. DR. THOS ARMITAGE.

"He is not here : for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."—MATT. xxviii. 6.

“**H**ALT! halt! Every man to his post! What, you call yourselves the iron-hearted soldiery of Rome? On pain of death, every man to his post!” This is the voice of command which you would have listened to hear in Joseph’s garden, just as the first grey gleam of light mounts the point of the sentinel’s spear very early on Sunday morning. Some disciplined officer had command of the detachment of imperial troops left to guard the tomb of Jesus, under the authority of Pontius Pilate. But you listen in vain for the word of command, for panic has seized them, and the whole guard, officers and men, fly in every direction, with none to arrest their headlong flight. What has happened? Their night-lamps are left burning, while helmet and breast-plate, sword and spear, are cast aside in every direction! Their sacramental oath is forgotten, the regal standard is tossed aside into the dust, the honour of the Roman name is trampled under foot, and the peril of a traitor’s death is braved by every man of the band: and all for what? The bugle of no invader has been sounded—the falchion of no grim foe has gleamed from afar—they have seen no cloud of battle rolling down upon them—what does all this mean? This and this only: “While it was yet dark,” the limestone

rocks beneath their feet began to heave, dull rumbling sounds muttered, as if the air around them was surcharged with heat ; the frightful earthquake of Friday was re-awakened, the sheeted population of adjacent tombs began to stalk forth, the ponderous stone at the mouth of the sepulchre which they were watching rolled from its place, under the resistless momentum of invisible hands ; the authority of the empire was splintered with the seal which represented it ; an angelic warrior took his seat upon the prostrated stone, and the empty tomb opened its mouth wide before them ! Do you wonder that the affrighted men of war fled ? Verily, Omnipotence was awaking from slumber. Death was shaking off forged and riveted manacles. Hell had been asleep on its own ruins, and now its triumph suffered eternal overthrow ; the dead Christ was shaking himself from his bed of dust, his charnel-house flamed with light, the grave of Joseph was transfigured into the pavilion of divine royalty, and the dead Christ of Nazareth was "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." No wonder that they flew in every direction. The greatest miracle of Christianity had been wrought before their eyes, and it had been a greater wonder still had they been able to look coolly on.

That, my friends, was not within the province of mortality. "For an angel of the Lord, descending out of heaven, came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, and for fear of him the keepers shook and became as dead men." When they had recovered their consciousness, they arose from their prostration, and, hastening to headquarters, reported all that had taken place. Their dismay was silenced by a bribe from those who had assigned them to their solitary trust, and the whole matter was hushed up on the contemptible pretext, that while the guard slept on duty "his disciples came by night and stole him away." Such credulity, calumny, and infamy, carries its own confutation with it, and is simply shocking when you take into the account *that the punishment of death was meted out to a Roman soldier*

inexorably when found sleeping at his post. But silence, secrecy, and silver strangled the truth in their own throats.

There were five different apparitions of our Lord on this Sunday after his resurrection from the dead. None of his disciples expected him to rise from the dead on that morning. Among the things which they found it the most difficult to believe to the very last, was that he should die at all; much less could they think that he would rise from the dead. Their whole conduct in forsaking him during his last contest, the fact that the women had made large preparations for completing the embalming of his body on Sunday morning, and their incredulity as to the reality of his resurrection when it was not only attested by credible witnesses, but by their own senses also, show how entirely unprepared they were for such a result. Then, again, it is a very remarkable fact, that the Evangelists give us no hint whatever that the mother of Jesus and her Son ever met again on earth after he had given her into the charge of the Apostle John as he hung upon the cross. We are expressly told that "the other Mary" who accompanied Mary Magdalene to the sepulchre on the morning of this day was "the mother of James." And still another thing relates to the length of time which Jesus lay in the grave. Our Lord had determined that question by a reference to the sign of the Prophet Jonah, by the declaration that the "temple of his body might be destroyed," but that in three days he would rebuild it, and on several other occasions he had said that "on the third day after his death he should rise again." Now, as we have seen, he was laid in the rocky portal before sunset on Friday evening, and left it very early on Sunday morning, as we should designate time; so that he was interred for about the space of, say, from thirty-six to forty hours. This would be a part of the day on Friday, on which day he died, at "the ninth hour," the whole of the day of Saturday, beginning with sundown on Friday night, and so much of Sunday as elapsed between sundown on Saturday night and the dawning of the day the next morning. These two nights and the whole of the intervening day formed a part of three days, which,

according to a mode of speaking common among the Jews, brought his resurrection on "the third day." They frequently reckon portions, both of days and years, as if they were the whole of those periods. Now let us follow the order of events for the day.

Mary Magdalene's breast is in a tumult of love and woe, which utters itself in sobs and tears, and yet her courage and intrepidity and promptitude were just as marked as her disquiet. And that moment she heard footsteps behind her, and, turning to look through her tears, she saw a stranger, whom she took to be Joseph's gardener, having come thus early in the morning to do his work. She paid but little attention to him. If Joseph himself had been there she might have questioned him about the removal of the body which he had begged. In a voice full of sweet human sympathy, such as angels cannot utter, the russet-clad labourer said to her, "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" This sympathy only increased her agony, when her vehemence burst forth in the pitiable exclamation, "Oh, sir, if thou hast taken him away, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will bear him away!" The simple pathos of her appeal is wonderful; every word trembles with intense devotion, so blind, so human, yet so artless. They seem to mean that Jesus was in everybody's way while he lived, and if now he was not welcome to this rich man's tomb, but must be taken to a more obscure and less inviting place, where his poor ashes could rest in peace, let me know, and I will find some quiet spot for him, where for once he will be free from strife, and where I can weep my life away upon his cold breast. The loving, mysterious gardener said to her, "Mary!" All the harmonies of Heaven thrill in that voice. She has heard that old, kind tone before. Seven devils had once fled from her heart before its penetrating tenderness. But it cannot be! Is it he? And alive! Amazement, hope, conviction, follow each other. Heaven bursts into the dark heart. It is he! The transition is so great, her heart will break for joy. Her transport cries for sheer relief, "Rabboni!—Oh, my Master!" And

she lies speechless at his wounded feet. There she lies moveless as death. Bewildered with joy, her transports are surging through her soul as if her soul must die of ecstasy. Her heart's problem is solved the moment her self-possession returns. "I have something to live for now!" her heart says; "I will cling to him now. If I do not hold fast, he will depart from me. I will never leave him, but for ever hold him fast, and bathe these feet with my tears."

Now Jesus said to her, "Touch me not; for I have not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and my God and your God." When she heard this she said to herself: "Well, then, if my Lord has his own work to do, and has work so sweet as this for me also, it is no time for me to be detaining him here at the mouth of the tomb that I may gratify my love by watering his feet with tears; that would be selfish indeed!" So she lovingly acquiesced in his wishes to become the bearer of glad tidings to others; and going quickly to the disciples, "as they mourned and wept," according to man's account, she cried out to them in that rapture which has touched every believing heart for nearly nineteen hundred years, "I have seen the Lord!" But "they, when they heard that he was alive and had been seen of her, believed not." This was his second apparition. The third appearance of Jesus that day was somewhere toward noon, when he appeared to Peter. None of the evangelists give the particulars of this interview. But Paul says: "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve." Luke tells us that when the twelve met on that evening, one of the first pieces of news which they communicated to each other was this: "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" But as our Lord was eight English miles from Jerusalem that afternoon, the fair inference is that he had had his first resurrection interview with Peter in the forenoon before he left Jerusalem. We know that Jesus was anxious to communicate with Peter after his resurrection. He had said to him at the supper table, "What I do thou shalt know hereafter." Again, at the same table, when Peter professed deathless

allegiance to him, he said: "The sheep shall be scattered, but after I am risen I will go before you into Galilee." He told Peter in effect by these words that he would be as true and faithful to him as if he had been strong and faultless. "After I am risen, as soon as I leave the dead, I will see thee." He was about to cross a dark river, but he could foresee himself on the other side, and safely back again. When the shepherd came back, he would regather the scattered sheep. When he awoke to newness of life in the tomb, the very first person whom he seems to have thought of was Peter; for he appears to have left a message with the angel for the poor fisherman. The angel said to the woman, Jesus "is not here, he is risen; go and tell his disciples, and Peter!" How would the angel have got Peter's name into the commission as a speciality if Jesus had not told him to be careful and do so? Why did not the angel put John's name into the message, or that of James? Truly they did not need the parenthesis as Peter did. Clearly, the women had been faithful to their trust, for by noon that day Jesus appeared to Simon. No man living can tell what the emotions of Peter were when the women told him the message which the angel had sent specially to him. Most likely he would have another good outpouring of tears over the double message of the angel and the women. He would ask his heart, "And is it possible that his first thought when he awakened was of me? After all that I have done, can it be possible that he loves me still? Oh! it is so like him; but can it be? But still, how can I ever look his raised body in the face, if he has truly come back? Will he spurn me, or will he smile? Will he repel me, or draw me to his breast?" And, my brethren, I feel unutterably thankful that this first interview between them is not recorded. I think that both Jesus and Peter felt it to be so intensely personal that it was deemed better to throw a veil over it; so that it is enough for us to know that "he was seen of Cephas." It is enough for us to know that his amiable, considerate Lord, and ours, poured balm into his bruised heart—that his friendship was renewed, his *disgrace* softened, his faith encouraged, and his soul not forgotten.

Thus this great morning closes. It can never be repeated. If you could go to Jerusalem to-day, you would find thousands shedding their tears at the supposed Holy Sepulchre. They go to see "the place where the Lord lay; but he is not there, he is risen." Since that great morning death has had no more dominion over him. How is it with the Sanhedrim, the Pharisees, Caiaphas, Judas, and Pilate? Where are they? Most of them lie there, slaves held under the iron dominion of death. And where is the first begotten from the dead? The heavens have received him till the times of the restitution of all things. Its lofty gates have welcomed him, his robes this morning are whiter than the driven snow, and he patiently waits to be your resurrection and life.

AMERICAN SABBATH IN THE CHURCHES.

BY REV. DR. MARVIN R. VINCENT.

"And he said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath."—MARK ii. 27.

YOU all remember the occasion of these words. They are our Lord's reply to the Pharisees when they rebuked the disciples for plucking corn to eat on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees' rebuke represents the false and hurtful view which the mass of the Jews had come to entertain of the Sabbath. It was an idol to which the interests of humanity were to be sacrificed. The Sabbath was more than man. Man was a Sabbath-keeping being; his convenience, his comfort, his pleasure, his very necessities were to be subordinated to the observance of this day. The books of the Jewish doctors and the consciences of the people were alike loaded down with ridiculous and arbitrary rules for Sabbath keeping. Christ announces no new truth on this subject; in this single utterance he directs the people back to the original principle of the institution of the Sabbath. Like every other provision of the moral code, this was made for man—for man's happiness, for man's comfort, for man's efficiency, to promote the length of his days, and his worldly, no less than his spiritual, prosperity. The Sabbath was instituted to be his delight, not his burden; to be his rest, not weariness and irritation of spirit. It was to expose him, on one day in seven, wholly to the action of those forces which most tend to foster *manhood*. A religious man, it was to give him leisure for

deliberate worship and prolonged communion with Heaven; for wholesome reflection and the recalling of salutary memories. A husband and father, it was to give him up to the companionship of the dear objects of his holiest affection. A household priest and instructor, it was to afford him time to teach his children the Lord's statutes. A business man, it was to relax his energies, and fit him, by rest and by diversion of mind, for more effective labour and for larger success. The Sabbath was made for man.

This fundamental truth must be kept clearly in mind as the basis of our discussion to-day. I am not, however, going to lead you into the mazes of the controversy between the Puritan Sabbath and the Continental Sabbath; of the question of opening public libraries or pleasure grounds, or of the running of street cars; whether children ought to be allowed to have their toys, or working men and women to ramble in the public parks. I do not propose, in short, to touch the question as it arises between the religious and the secular world. The question before us to-day is, how far we as Christians, in our church life and our methods of worship, understand and practise the true theory of Sabbath observance as originally given by God and interpreted by Jesus Christ in our text. Are we using the Sabbath to the best advantage? Are we getting out of it all the blessings that God has lodged therein for us and for our fellow-men? Let us look at this question as related to four points, viz., rest, Christian instruction, domestic life, and Christian work.

First, *rest*. That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual. The fundamental idea of the Sabbath is that of physical rest. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Then, as the first comment upon this—the only comment, indeed—abstinence from labour is enjoined and enlarged upon to a degree somewhat unusual in a condensed code like the Ten Commandments. Take care of the body, it seems to say, as the foundation on which the spiritual and intellectual are to rise. If we are ever tempted to be

surprised at the purely physical aspect of this commandment, let us not forget what stress Paul lays upon bodily culture. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." There the exhortation stops. The words "and in your spirit which are his," were added by some late hand. And the very fact that we are now and then startled by the emphasis which is laid by the Bible upon bodily culture is in itself a proof that we have gotten upon a wrong line of thought—the line of the medieval theology which viewed the body not as God's agent, but as God's enemy; not as a servant to be trained and developed to do his will, and to be the minister of mind and soul, but as an encumbrance, to be ignored in mental and spiritual culture, and as a tempter and seducer, to be kept down by fasting and maceration. We too readily fall into the habit of thinking that while we are under obligation to glorify God with our spirit, we may do with our body pretty much as we please. And as a correction of that error it will do us good to remember that God has wrought the obligation to our bodies into the very heart of the moral law as well as into the Gospel. Here, in this fourth commandment, is his solemn injunction to take care of the body. Now the life in our large American cities—New York, Chicago, San Francisco—during six days in the week is a continuous physical strain, a draft upon nervous energy such as is experienced nowhere else in the world. Our climate is exciting, our business methods devised to do the most in the shortest time. Speed is our chief end in life. It was only last week that a prominent business man said to me, "I can do more in one hour in New York than in twelve on the other side the Atlantic." There is an intensity about both our business and social life which you find nowhere else. There are Wall and Broad Streets, with their hurrying forms and knots gathering on the corners. There are the offices with the steady click of the telegraph noting the mysterious fluctuations of stocks on

which millions are staked, and eager eyes ever scanning and nervous fingers ever handling the long white strip which carries the hieroglyphs of ruin or of fortune. There are the Stock Exchange and the Gold Room, with their delirious excitements, which spread like waves into every counting-room in the city. There are the meals snatched in crowded restaurants, where some demon of hurry seems to be goading every knife and spoon. Hurry, hurry! is the very atmosphere we breathe. Business and professional men alike are whirled at the top of their speed, and must find or make time in the intervals of business for all manner of boards and committees—political, ecclesiastical, and charitable. A good portion of our best men, as soon as the warm season commences, will vary the riot and fury of the street by speeding from two to four hours daily upon a jarring, driving railway train. Men of splendid literary powers are consuming the day in making a living, and drawing on the night for the glorious brain-work, which is just a coining of their life blood for the world's use. I might go on thus to the end of the hour. We give ourselves little rest. We do not know what to do with a holiday. The night substitutes the social for the business whirl, and so we move, and—well, now and then one drops quietly out of the whirl into an insane hospital—a retreat, as it is so sweetly called. Here and there one goes down with epilepsy in the full swing of his power, and some more begin to rot at the top, with that fearful softening of the brain. Now and then you find a man who says frankly, as one did to me not a week ago, that he looks forward to sudden death by apoplexy. And I suppose there are times when we all realize that this wear and tear of everlasting strain are abnormal, unnatural, and disastrous, and yet we turn wearily away each time, saying: "God help us! we are in the maelstrom; we must swim with the whirl, or be sucked down."

To men thus placed, if to any men in the world, the Sabbath should be a boon. Whatever spiritual meaning it may have to such—and it should have a very deep and rich and blessed spiritual meaning—it should signify physical relief, a relaxing of

mental and nervous strain, a withdrawal of all unhealthy excitement, an opportunity for healing, quieting influences to get hold of the man and steep him in their balsams of rest. The question is, how far the Church has recognised this fact. I think she is beginning to have just a glimmering of the truth. I cannot say any more than that. There has been a little advance. Nearly thirty years ago I was a member of a large church on the east side of this city. The Sabbath began with Sabbath school at nine o'clock. At some seasons—for a good portion of the summer, for instance—there was held a five o'clock morning prayer meeting; class meetings were held at the same time with the Sabbath school. Then came preaching. Then more class meetings, Sabbath school at one o'clock, preaching again, more class meetings, sometimes a prayer meeting at six o'clock, evening preaching, and, during the winter, prayer meeting after preaching. This last service, both preaching and prayer meeting, was ordinarily of a very exciting character. And this church was not an exception. That was the way in which hundreds of good men and women were accustomed to pass the Sabbath, year in and year out, and that, too, when, often for five or six weeks in the year, meetings were held every night in the week. We have made a little advance upon that in later years. We have dropped one preaching service out of three; but the second Sabbath school service is still maintained in not a few churches and missions. A prayer meeting is often added still to the other services, and a mission teacher's Sabbath includes two Sabbath school sessions, and not unfrequently three preaching services. Sabbath school teaching is delightful work, but it is exhausting work if it is properly done. In short, the notion is not altogether exploded that, since the week is overcrowded with secular work, as much religious work as possible must be crowded into the Sabbath; and it would not be difficult to find churches where the ideal of prosperity seems to be a continuous whirl during the Sabbath with the machinery of Bible classes, sermons, Christian associations, and prayer meetings. Even leaving out the Sabbath schools and prayer meetings,

where one attends, as is so frequently the case, three full preaching services on the Sabbath, he must find the day pretty thoroughly occupied. Now I need hardly say that no question arises here as to the value of all these religious agencies. That is fully recognized. Nor is the question pertinent whether this distribution of the Sabbath hours is enjoyed. It doubtless is in many cases; but a good thing may be wrongfully enjoyed. The only question is, Is the physical purpose of the Sabbath met by this mode of spending it? Do men get the proper amount of rest for their wearied bodies and over-taxed brains by spending the entire day in the sustained mental effort of hearing two or three sermons and of teaching one or two Bible classes in addition? Are they acting upon sound sanitary, common-sense principles by thus steadily keeping up mental and nervous tension, deceiving themselves into a sense of relief because the direction from which the strain comes is changed? Do they go back to their tasks on Monday morning fresher, brighter men because of God's gift of Sabbath rest? It may be said, It does not follow that because there are so many services one need attend upon them all. I reply, first, that I am speaking to those who do attend upon them all, or upon most of them; and second, that as respects the services of public worship, it is a most demoralizing and hurtful thing for any church to be obliged to maintain services which its members feel themselves at liberty to neglect at pleasure. The rest which is gained by such neglect is purchased at the expense of pastors and by the deterioration of the Church's moral influence.

We cannot go further in this direction without striking the second relation of this truth, viz., to *Christian instruction*. In giving us a day of physical rest, God did not intend to give us a day of idleness. In a true child of God—and we are concerned here only with such—it is assumed that thoughts of God will be his most congenial thoughts, and that the relaxations of the Sabbath will be grateful to him chiefly because of its suffering his mind to fly back from its worldly cares and settle upon its central point of rest. He will be like a child at board-

school, who delights in the weekly holiday chiefly because it restores him to the company of his parents. Hence religious instruction has always been a recognized feature of Sabbath observance, and in this I include all that goes to make us better acquainted with God in Christ, whether preaching, private study, or personal communion with God. Preaching is a legitimate means to this end, but too much preaching is as bad as none. It is quite easy to say that one cannot have too much of so good a thing as gospel preaching; but if the quantity is so great as to make it defeat in any measure its own end, surely it is too much. And that may very easily be; for the true power of a sermon lies in its being taken up thoroughly by the hearer's mind, its truth pondered and sifted and worked into his thought and into the fibre of his character. All that is not thus worked up is waste; and if the mind attempts to take up sermon after sermon, two or three in quick succession, one crowds out the other, and prevents the assimilation of any. And thus the habit is slowly induced—the habit which makes many persons capable of listening to such an enormous amount of preaching—of relying upon the immediate impression of the sermon, instead of upon that which careful reflection may draw out of it. Hence, the more this demand is supplied, the more clamorous it becomes, and the more clamorous, too, for momentary sensation rather than for solid thought. The simple question is, Do the present habits of Sabbath observance encourage that leisurely reflection upon sacred truth which is indispensable to its work on the human soul? Do they discourage it?

Again, it will not be claimed that the mass of even Christian people are over-familiar with the Bible. I think you must have frequently heard the remark, "I know nothing about the Old Testament—I seldom read it;" and many of those who make that confession would not stand a very close examination on the New Testament either. But the Bible cannot be studied through the medium of sermons alone. From a sermon one often gets only a partial view of a single text. Preaching, in order to do its best work, must be supplemented by the careful Bible reading

of the hearers. Yet in the face of this fact, in the face of the conditions of our life which leave so little leisure in the week, in the face of the fact that the Sabbath was given for just this quiet, studious deep-sinking into the Word, how much opportunity for it do the present demands of public Sabbath service afford? And when we add to this that the most thorough study of God's Word avails little without personal communion with God himself, does it seem as if the Christian reaps the full blessing of God's Sabbath gift, if everything prevents him from getting time for study, reflection, and prayer over the words of eternal life? Rest! Why there is no rest like that which comes to the man who sits down alone with his Bible. Those words which come out of that realm of perfect rest lift him into their own atmosphere for the time. There is none of the feverish expectation, the restless craving for novelty, with which one too often waits upon the words of the preacher. It is rather the wrapping of the face in the mantle after the whirlwind and the fire have passed by, to listen to the still small voice which shows us to ourselves. And one reason why we are fast losing all the restfulness out of our lives is because we fail to take our rest thus in the Word, and do not give it time enough to press its leaves of healing upon our careworn spirits, and hold them there until we get back our child's heart again. Everything here tends to the excessive development of the active side of life, and to the corresponding neglect of the contemplative side. But they belong together, and this latter claims at least an equal portion of the Sabbath with its more stirring brother, and we shall wrong it if we shall carry up the hurry and bustle of the week upon the higher, calmer plane of that day, and think in our zeal that we are doing God service. We may justly shrink from the morbidness of the over-contemplative life. Let us not forego also the fruitfulness of the life which happily mingles contemplation with action. But this question of Christian instruction goes still further, as it stands related to the work of parental teaching. The Sabbath calls back our minds to God's covenant made with Christian parents and their children, and to

the obligations which grow out of this—obligations to teach their children the statutes and ordinances of God. It is a work which cannot be transferred, a work which belongs in the very order of nature, no less than in the ordinance of God, to the parent. It is essentially right that the most vital of all truths should be impressed at the age which is most susceptible, and by the teacher to whom nature gives the greatest influence. And this is a matter which intimately concerns the Church. The Church and the family! Why separate in our thoughts those two which God has joined together? The Christian Church and the Christian family are not two, but one. The family is the basis of the Church. The Church is the body of families. Family training is Church training. The Church does not receive children out of the family as from another fold, to commit their training to a new set of teachers. They are in its fold by virtue of being in its Christian households, and their training is going on at the hands of the Church's agents, ordained by a higher power than the laying on of hands—the Christian parent. And when this matter of household training in religion is neglected, the Church is stricken in its very heart. It is not enough that the child gets its religious training somehow. If it fails to receive it in the family, it loses something which no other influence can supply. The pastor cannot give it; the Sabbath school cannot give it.

I will not stop now to inquire if this obligation is recognized and accepted throughout the Christian church, or whether the Sabbath school is not entrusted with a work which ought to be done elsewhere. I believe in the Sabbath school. I value its work, and, as things are, I see its necessity. But I say, frankly, that I wish the obligation of parents in the matter of Christian instruction were so generally recognized as to set free a large mass of teachers to instruct those who have not Christian parents. The church, in departing from God's order in this matter, is not working with good economy of power. Be that as it may, the obligation itself is undeniable, and with this *the fact that there must be time for family instruction, and if*

business presses so stringently as to afford little time in the week, if the children are busy at school and with their studies, God's day brings with it an opportunity, and the church is just as much bound to leave room in her Sabbath arrangements for family teaching as she is to provide for preaching. The one cannot be thoroughly effective without the other. They belong together. The most eloquent preaching will be shorn of half its power if the parents and children of the Church fail to meet over the Word of God in the sweet seclusion of the household. I only ask the question, and leave it: Do the arrangements of the churches, and the ordinary Christian habits of Sabbath keeping, promote this end?

The transition is very easy here to the third relation in which this question presents itself. Other influences besides study and worship go to the making of good men and women, and pre-eminent among these is the *home life*. But it is an influence which in our American society is sadly crowded and hampered by the tremendous pressure of business. Men see too little of their homes. To many of them they are little more than sleeping places six days in the week. Married, pre-occupied, overdriven, they find a child's cares a burden, and the cheerful chat of the family table an irritation. Now, in proportion as a man is deprived of such influences, or rendered less sensible to them, he tends to barbarism. These are the forces which God has set round him to prevent him degenerating into a mere money-coining machine; to keep the sanctuary of his life swept and garnished from the world's dust; and if on other days these forces cannot reach him, they ought to have leave to exert their full power over him on that blessed day which leaves his mind free to fix itself upon the Father of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. His cares ought to be soothed by the sympathy and tenderness of a true, brave woman. He ought to sweeten and mellow under the smile and caress of his babe. His worldly hardness and self-containment ought to thaw at the touch of his child's hand, and *his heart to open at its questioning lips and confiding face, and*

his artificialness shrivel in the atmosphere of freedom and simplicity which pervades his home. So it ought to be. That is an influence which a man needs just as much as he needs worship or Christian instruction, an influence which will render him more susceptible to the power of worship and of religious thought. The Sabbath ought to give him room for this, for the Sabbath was made for man, and on that side of his nature he is most human. Does the established mode of Sabbath observance give him room for this? Does he get it, when, after a late breakfast, the children hurry to Sabbath school, and perhaps return to the house when Sabbath school is over, leaving him and his wife to go to church alone?—when the noonday meal is followed by slumber, and that by church, and that by church again in the evening? I merely put the question, How much does that fagged business or professional man see of his family under such circumstances? What chance have the sweet influences of domestic life to rest upon him?

And now a few words respecting the last point, the relations of this question to *Christian activity*. I must be brief here, for my time is growing short. It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day—we have our Saviour's word for that; and even a tired man or woman is the better for a little healthy Christian effort on the Sabbath day. Only we must make up our minds that if we are to give out something on the Sabbath day, we must not occupy the whole time with receiving. If we are to teach, we must not give the whole time to being taught. At any rate, Christians should be relieved of a conflict of obligations on the Sabbath day. They should not feel that the time they are spending in Christian work trenches upon the time which belongs to the public worship of the sanctuary. As things now are, the heavy burden of mission Sabbath school work comes upon a few who are obliged to make the Sabbath a day of driving, wearing toil, in order to discharge their duty to God's poor, and to get their own share of spiritual meat from the sanctuary. If, on the one hand, a large body of our *matured* and intelligent Christians could be set free to take hold

of this work for an hour on the Sabbath, and on the other hand the work of mission teaching could be confined to one vigorous session, instead of being spread out over two, I think the arrangement would be more equable, and vastly more effective.

In short, the question may very properly arise whether our Sabbath, as at present observed, gives us scope and variety enough; whether we are not hampered somewhat by the traditional notion that the Sabbath must be mainly spent in hearing sermons. Even in the matter of Christian instruction, if that is to be the prominent thing on the Sabbath (which I by no means concede), there is a variety possible which we have not seriously contemplated. I think a second service, if we are to have one, might much more properly be made an occasion of familiar Bible teaching, or an occasion of more prayer and praise, and of less preaching. I have been puzzled myself as to the best way of making a service for the children and youth at regular intervals. There are young men and women with whom I should like to come into closer contact as a Christian teacher. I ask the question again, How far do our commonly accepted notions of Sabbath observance give scope for these things?

I leave the subject just here. My object has not been to propose changes or suggest remedies, but to stimulate inquiry on this important theme. Given the conditions of our society, the facts of our religious development as we see them, the true design of the Sabbath as explained by Jesus Christ, the large possibilities back of physical and of spiritual good which are laid up in it, are we, as ministers and church members, making the most and the best of it by our method of observing it? Are we making the churches tell most effectively on that day? Are we letting the Sabbath lay its touch upon all the hidden springs which minister to the compacting and enriching of Christian manhood and the healthy development of Christian childhood? It is a public day: do we tend to make it exclusively a public day? It is a social day: do we leave out of view its opportunities for communing with our own hearts? It is a day of Christian activity: do we forget that it is a day of

rest, and, by failing to bear our share of the work, deprive others of their share of the rest? If we are on the right path, may God increase our strength; if we are wrong, let us not be afraid to sift old methods. Oh! that the Master himself—the Lord of the Sabbath—may teach us to walk through this field which his feet have trodden, and which God's hand has so graciously fenced in from a bustling world—that every hour may be as a full golden ear, yielding the bread of heaven to refresh our weariness and to renew our powers.

JESUS WEPT.

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

"Jesus wept."—JOHN xi. 35.

THIS least of all verses in the Bible will bring before us a theme which I have long desired to suggest to your thoughts—that our current Christianity is wanting in pathos. Led by new times, new places, new customs, religion seems to be moving away from the loving, rejoicing, and weeping spirit, and taking up its abode in the halls of discussion or in the porch of philosophy. Busy in gathering up the morals and doctrines of Jesus, we all seem willing to forget that he wept, that great waves of sorrow rolled at times in his heart. In its discriminating work, in its great task of sifting truth from error, our age has, perhaps, been compelled to neglect the emotional side of its own religion; and, against the charge of neglecting this beautiful and useful side, it may well plead the presence and pressure of other religious duties. If it has overlooked the tears of Christ; it feels that it has done so because it was deeply engaged over his philosophy. In all our remarks, and thoughts too, let us not find fault with our times, and, instead of being students, become only complaining souls; but let us simply look at the attitude of our age as to the pathetic in religion—look, not that we may scold, but that we may learn and may amend, if possible, our ways.

No age can carry along all the forms of truth, and beauty, and goodness at once. Its arms cannot grasp so large a load. The

great world of civilization is never moved forward in one mass, but is taken to pieces by the wandering human beings; and, while one generation is carrying along the law or the agriculture, another crowd is following afar off with the arts, or the sciences, or the luxuries. The spring of all motion is found in a kind of enthusiasm that belongs to the soul; and as enthusiasm always fastens itself upon only one object at a time, and hence pursues a narrow path, any given age will thus be found pursuing its own narrow way. While the Romans loved law and conquest, the Greeks loved art; and while some third land was mad over games, a fourth land was, perhaps, waking up to a zeal of religion and another to a pursuit of gold. Not only are the works of man too great to be carried forward all at once, but there has always been a difficulty in the way of nations as to the works of the intellect and the sentiments, one period being able to obey only the intellect, another only the heart. Thus while Germany and England have sought out and loved the doctrines of religion, France and Italy have cared less for the doctrines, but much for the emotional part of Christianity.

Thus society is a partial actor, loving this to-day, and neglecting or hating that, and then to-morrow being ready to change about, and to love what it once despised, or despise what it had loved tenderly. No individual rising up in the first century or the nineteenth finds the complete Christianity anywhere around him, but he finds only what the times in their partiality and weakness are able to appreciate and appropriate. Thus it comes to pass that the religion of Palestine was all aglow with fervour and sentiment, while the religion of Scotland has always been full of philosophy and reserve, a form of truth rather than a glow of fervour.

These general remarks will prepare us to believe that in our own land and age we are not seeking nor enjoying the whole of religion, but are cherishing an American part of it, and are full of egotism over the supposed possession of a universe, when we are really poor, and, instead of holding a world complete, are the *inhabitants of only a small farm.*

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It appears that the Christianity of our day and country is full in the study and love of principles, but is quite deficient in pathos and spiritual tenderness. We all gather up the maxims of Jesus, but do not pause long nor often over the scene outlined in the text, because the tears of things are at a discount.

The Christ of our age is a thinking, not a weeping, Christ. But the Christ of the early church was the Jesus that wept. Hence all the old galleries are full of the pictures of Christ as crowned with thorns, or as weeping in the garden, or as being placed in the tomb. It is to be hoped that no present or future age will return to the old gloom and melancholy of the past centuries; but it is also to be hoped that no time, present or future, will get away from that quantity and quality of melancholy and sorrow that actually belong to human life and religion. Unhappy day, when the weeping and dying Christ shall cease to be impressive, and nothing shall remain but Christ as a divine philosopher.

There are several reasons why it might have been anticipated of our age that it would become cold and mental in religion, rather than tender, tearful, and spiritual.

1. The race that first came to this land was a race of brain rather than of heart. The northern races have never been children of poetry and sentiment, but of intellect. The moment you pass the northern confines of Italy and France you begin to move away from emotion and toward the thinking faculties; and our ancestors coming from the most northern parallels brought with them plenty of intellectual life and power, but not much emotion. They brought a deluge of laws and doctrines: laws that regulated every motion of the body and each event of life; laws about Sunday and Monday; laws about food and drink, courtship and marriage, and about the language to be used, and even about the hour of retiring at night: and next to this deluge of laws came the great flood of church doctrines—a flood not clear, but wide and deep, covering home, and shop, and court-house, and church in its inundation.

2. Next to *this bad beginning* came the influence of absorbing

practical affairs. We became a nation of most slavish workmen. There was no rest for anybody, for a nation was to be carved out of a savage continent, and homes and comforts had to be formed out of a bleak wilderness. Such a nation of actual toilers had never before appeared upon earth; and if any one will compare the America of the pilgrims with the America of to-day he will confess that work the most stupendous has been done. But the effect of these two centuries of hard toil has been certainly to make us a practical people, and hence to make Christianity become strong in its practical side—strong in its law and philosophy and most real ideas. But what is the meaning of strength in this department? It implies weakness upon the side of the more spiritual and the less visible. This immense development of the practical implies a neglect or decline of the imagination—an exaltation of the Christ who taught above the Christ who wept. We have all become ashamed of so much of religion as relates to Heaven, and crowns, and harps, and the blessed companionship of the saints here and hereafter; and are proud of it only as a bundle of wise precepts and vague expectations. The perpetual hard work of our land has evidently clipped the wings of its fancy, and it seems all unfitted for seeing Abraham's mystical city when it journeys, or Jacob's vision of angels when it sleeps.

To be a true symmetrical Christian, imagination that can look beyond and see the domes of Paradise—that can rise above the dust of this flat earth and look over pearly gates and see immortal flowers—that can live beyond these months, and see unnumbered years away from this cemetery of the dead—this imagination is needed more than one needs the forms and history of a thousand dogmas. But the long, toiling, practical years of our land have warred against all things which the eye cannot see or the hand touch, and have left us the possessors of a religion which resembles a statute book more than an Abraham's faith or a St. John's rapture.

3. To these two influences—that of race and of labour—we must now add a third, more powerful than the other two

combined : the age has become sceptical and mathematical. For reasons which we could not enumerate here, even if we knew them all, our age realizes little beyond its every-day horizon, and sits down in doubt where our fathers advanced in full assurance. Heaven is not so much a reality as a possibility. The grave is not a gateway at all hours, but an end. Thousands and tens of thousands have settled down into the determination that they will only wait and see. As for the present they know nothing of the unseen world, and they can only fold their arms and wait. This cloud of distrust is enwrapping the young and old ; and whether it comes from an extreme science which tries to construct a universe without a God, or from a theology which tries to construct a universe by means of a dishonourable God, here is the cloud of distrust, an undeniable reality.

Now the first thing in religion which falls victim to scepticism is, of course, its less real, less visible elements. Its casuistry, its precepts, its conscience, its faith and love stand forth in beauty, for they are founded upon the simplest dictates of reason, and hence the Christ stands so far as he is attached by history and by association to these ; but the cross and the grave and the resurrection suffer because the evidence beneath those ideas is less questionable. Hence, Christ as a teacher of morals is loved, but the Jesus who wept falls more and more into shadow. What suffers most in a sceptical era is all that is poetic, pensive, or mysterious ; that which is earthly alone flourishes best. From a flower garden religion falls back into a desert, just as long drifting sands have at last made the once rich Palestine a dreary waste.

Under these three influences—an original race that brought only intellect, labour that inaugurated the material and practical, and an era of scepticism which doubts all beyond its feet—religion has lost a great wealth of sentiment and pathos which set forth with it in its morning, and which is inseparable from its greatness.

This loss is visible not only in the lives we see and words we

hear to-day, but more visible by contrast when we look into the words and lives of the past. The sermons of past ages were largely made up of the pathos of religion. They came short in logical force, as our own age comes short in affection; but as for pathos it was the queen of all the old eloquence. The pulpit orator would describe the crucifixion in all its details. He would invite his audience to see the rude pieces of wood; to watch this soldier run for nails, that one for ropes, that one for the hammer left a little beyond reach, and then would let them see the victim grasped by rude hands and laid down and bound and nailed to the instrument of torture and death. Traces of this preaching must have been still in the world when some of the oldest of this audience were young; but they have all passed away from the horizon of the Church as the clouds of those days have passed. We do not regret that the same kind of pathos, so full often of the horrible, has ceased to exist; but what we note is, that the whole world of the emotional has sunk and faded too completely, and has made room for a domain of thought neither so beautiful nor any more true or useful. If you will take down the sermons of Isaac Watts, you will be surprised at his themes. The Judgment Day, the wicked soul surprised in death, the Christian dying in peace—these are the style of subject that delighted and interested the multitude in his generation.

The great change that has come, has come not to the pulpit alone, but to the bar and to all public shapes of speech. The words of the bar are almost wholly confined to logical statements of the most formal kind, the pathos and poetry of past times having been almost wholly eliminated not by the learning of the new generation any more than by its coldness. Neither of these great professions can be held responsible for the change, for they are themselves only the creatures of the age, doing what the public demands and what some invisible spirit orders them to do, whose orders few individuals can disobey. Emotion can be withdrawn from the bar with less injury or violence than must attend its withdrawal from religion, for the law depends *little upon imagination or sentiment in reality*; hence the era of

practical sense and of logic may actually add to this profession upon one side what it steals from another; but not so with religion. Imagination and all the emotional parts of the soul is its indispensable ally, and nothing logic can bring to the pulpit or pew will ever atone for the absence of this chief.

To some minds imagination is known only as a power that fabricates, that furnishes us with falsehoods instead of truths; but instead of such a mission the prime office of that faculty is to help us in the fields of truth that lie beyond our feet. It is by imagination the father looks back to his boyhood, and that the youth looks onward to manhood. It was by imagination Webster was enabled to look to the future of our country and see the last setting sun shining upon a flag unrent and upon states one and inseparable. The astronomer must invoke this power to enable him to see the stars all moving in their orbits and to realize the greatness of the universe he loves. The logical faculty alone is the coldest and dearest of all things, and would not make a statesman, nor even an astronomer or a geologist. How, then, can Christianity escape decline, or even death, in an age wedded to the slate and pencil in business and to scepticism in religion?

But we need no longer delay over the statement of the case. The case seems clear, and we can only say that it is the misfortune of our day that it does not love the spiritual side of religion. The Unitarian or Broad Church loves the philosophy of Christ, the example of Christ; the liberal orthodox churches love the more cardinal doctrines of the Gospel; while the extra orthodox churches love neither of these things, but deeply love themselves and their dogmas without visible regard to quality or quantity; but all of us alike keep away from the poetry and joy and pathos of that religion whose tears fell all the way from Jacob to Mary Magdalen. Christianity is based upon the solemnities of life, and upon its coming glories too. Without the pageantry of death and the judgment beyond, without the vision of the myriad souls of earth rising to immortality, leaving behind them their *sins and griefs*, Christianity is nothing. The

Bible is only a compilation of social ethics. But the moment the mind yields to the mysteries of the grave and futurity, then the religion of Christ rises up in all its magnificent proportions, and is not an ethics only, but a resurrection and a paradise, the drama of humanity. The words "Jesus wept" are full of instruction to our age. No age ever needed so much those tears. They ought to fall all over our land to soften the hearts of all us busy ones, and help us see the scenes which dimmed those holier eyes so long ago. For that great son of man did not weep without a cause, and not for a trifling cause. There is nothing in the words of Christ, nothing in his life, that showed any weak sentimentality. In all his days, from the first one to that last one on the cross, nothing is visible but a heroism above all known to men. Hence this weeping was only a part of that great grasping of human sorrow here and hereafter that showed itself all along in the sympathy and pensiveness of his life. He came not as the prince of a philosophy, or an eloquence, or any worldly pursuit, but as the student or teacher of life and death. As St. John stood in Patmos, and saw no longer the earth of the Cæsars, but saw the great spectacle of life and death, heard the great thunders of wrath, and saw also the pearly gates of joy, so Christ, in a sublimer way, saw not the world's riches, or bonds, or pleasures, but beheld instead the great phenomena of sin and virtue, grief and joy, outspread over the career of man. Hence the tears by the dead Lazarus, and in the garden, and the sorrowful heart at all times.

The forgiveness which he flung out as flowers, right and left, the gathering up of little children in his arms, the benedictions upon the mount, all seem to have come from his wide grasp of life's mystery, when children should go from parents, and friend from friend, when two should be grinding in the mill, and the one should be taken and the other left; from a realization of the day when rich and poor, high and low, should lie down in the great sleep of

"Earth to earth and dust to dust,
Where the sword and sceptre rust;

Where the matron and the maid
In one silent bed are laid ;
Where the vassal and the king
Side by side lie withering."

To this Christ, earth was not, as to us, a market-place, or a palace of pleasure, or a sweet home, but it was a dissolving scene, a great army marching along through an iron gate whence none could ever return. The tears, and words, and cross of Christ are all founded upon the tomb and future of man. Christianity is nothing without these symbols of sorrow.

Now these thrilling facts which filled with tears the eyes of this Nazarene remain to-day in all their impressiveness. The human family has not ceased going to the tomb. As autumn leaves fall, so the human hearts that were warm and full of friendship yesterday go to-day by myriads to the low earth, empty of love and life. All that ever drew tears from anyone remains to invite us also to weep. The mystery of death, and of joy or sorrow afterward, has undergone no change since that group bowed over the tomb of Lazarus. In a few years we shall all have gone from this earth. The places thereof shall know us no more for ever. The home where you were loved, the streets where you walked, your place in the sanctuary, will know you no more. The scene over which Jesus wept is a perpetual scene, and he wept not simply because Lazarus lay thus asleep, but because in that grave was mirrored the calamity of the human race. Our era of hard logic is good for much. It is separating the true from the false, the wheat from the chaff, and is burning the chaff with unquenchable fire ; it is compelling Romanism and Protestantism to re-state their doctrines, and reject the false ; but so far as it goes beyond this, and makes the heart doubt the intangible, and renders the soul too cold to feel the melancholy of this shore, and its joyful hope too, it makes poor amend for the credulity which once gathered the true and false into one great sheaf, but wept over all in tenderness. Religion is complete only to him who to its ethics and doctrines can add its solemn mysteries, and not fear to make them a theme

of thought when alone and in converse with his fellow-men. It is absolutely an evil of our times that they reject from thought the wonderful, and limit language and feeling only to the most real and most actual. What a perfect world and age it would be if we could combine the reasoning power of the present with the affectionate and spiritual power of the past.

It must be that the great Catholic ages gathered whole populations, young and old, rich and poor, into their Churches and close to the altars, not by the power of law alone, but by the power of sentiment, which expressed itself not only in paintings and architecture and music, but in all the splendours of the Christ as he lived, and died, and rose for them. Learning reaches only a few, logic alone charms only the world's elect, but the beautiful and pathetic are for all, and for the good of all, and our American religion will accomplish its great mission when it shall, by houses of worship built for all, and by a religion of love and sympathy and simplicity understood by all, and of song and music and friendship felt by all, become more like its Christ, a most wonderful blending of truth and affection, of wisdom and tears.

My friends, trust not your own age implicitly. It is not carrying along the whole of Christianity. It may betray you. See to it each for himself that its logic shall not pluck the flower wreaths from the cross, that the coldness of science shall not blind you to the march of death beside us and before us, and deaden the ear to the music sounding beyond the tomb.

GOD'S EXHAUSTIVE KNOWLEDGE OF MAN.

BY REV. WM. G. T. SHEDD, D.D.

"O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine up-rising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compasses my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."—PSALM CXXXIX. 1—6.

ONE of the most remarkable characteristics of a rational being is the power of self-inspection. The brute creation possesses many attributes that are common to human nature, but it has no faculty that bears even the remotest resemblance to that of self-examination. Instinctive action, undoubtedly, approaches the nearest of any to human action. That wonderful power by which the bee builds up a structure that is not exceeded in accuracy, and regularity, and economy of space, by the best geometry of Athens or of Rome; by which the beaver, after having chosen the very best possible location for itself on the stream, constructs a dam that outlasts the work of the human engineer; by which the faithful dog contrives to perform many acts of affection, in spite of obstacles, and in the face of unexpected discouragements—the instinct, we say, of the brute creation, as exhibited in a remarkably wide range of action and contrivance, and in a very varied and oftentimes perplexing conjuncture of circumstances, seems to bring man and beast very near to each other, and to furnish some ground for the theory of the materialist, that there is no essential difference between the two species of existences. But when we pass beyond the mere

power of acting, to the additional power of surveying or inspecting an act, and of forming an estimate of its relations to moral law, we find a faculty in man that makes him differ in kind from the brute. No brute animal, however high up the scale, however ingenious and sagacious he may be, can ever look back and think of what he has done, "his thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing him."

But this characteristic of a rational being, though thus distinctive and common to every man that lives, is exceedingly marvellous. Like the air we breathe, like the light we see, it involves a mystery that no man has ever solved. Self-consciousness has been the problem and the thorn of the philosophic mind in all ages; and the mystery is not yet unravelled. Is not that a wonderful process by which a man knows, not some other thing, but himself? Is not that a strange act by which he, for a time, duplicates his own unity, and sets himself to look at himself? All other acts of consciousness are comparatively plain and explicable. When we look at an object other than ourselves—when we behold a tree or the sky—the act of knowledge is much more simple and easy to be explained. For then there is something outside of us and in front of us, and another thing than we are, at which we look, and which we behold. But in this act of self-inspection there is no second thing, external and extant to us, which we contemplate. That which is seen is one and the same identical object with that which sees. The act of knowledge which in all other instances requires the existence of two things—a thing to be known and a thing to know—in this instance is performed with only one. It is the individual soul that sees, and it is that very same individual soul that is seen. It is the individual man that knows, and it is that very identical man that is known. The eyeball looks at the eyeball.

And when this power of self-inspection is connected with the power of memory the mystery of human existence becomes yet more complicated, and its explanation still more baffling. Is it *not* exceedingly wonderful that we are able to re-exhibit our

own thoughts and feelings; that we can call back what has gone clear by in our experience, and steadily look at it once more? Is it not a mystery that we can summon before our mind's eye feelings, purposes, desires, and thoughts which occurred in the soul long years ago, and which, perhaps, until this moment we have not thought of for years? Is it not a marvel that they come up with all the vividness with which they first took origin in our experience, and that the lapse of time has deprived them of none of their first outlines or colours? Is it not strange that we can recall that one particular feeling of hatred toward a fellow-man which rankled in the heart twenty years ago; that we can now eye it, and see it as plainly as if it were still throbbing within us; that we can feel guilty for it once more, as if we were still cherishing it? If it were not so common, would it not be surprising that we can reflect upon acts of disobedience toward God which we committed in the days of childhood, and far back in the dim twilights of moral agency; that we can re-act them, as it were, in our memory, and fill ourselves again with the shame and distress that attended their original commission? Is it not one of those mysteries which overhang human existence, and from which that of the brute is wholly free, that man can live his life, and act his agency over, and over, and over again, indefinitely and for ever, in his self-consciousness; that he can cause all his deeds to pass and re-pass before his self-reflection, and be filled through and through with the agony of self-knowledge? Truly such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from my own spirit, and whither shall I flee from my own presence? If I ascend up into heaven, it is there looking at me. If I make my bed in hell, behold it is there torturing me. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there must I know myself, and acquit or condemn myself.

But if that knowledge whereby man knows himself is mysterious, then certainly that whereby God knows him is far more so. That act whereby another being knows my secret-thoughts

and inmost feelings is most certainly inexplicable. That cognition whereby another person understands what takes place in the corners of my heart, and sees the minutest movements of my spirit, is surely high ; most surely I cannot attain unto it.

And yet it is a truth of revelation that God searches the heart of man ; that he knows his downsitting and uprising, and understands his thought afar off ; that he compasses his path and his lying down, and is acquainted with all his ways. And yet it is a deduction of reason, also, that because God is the creator of the human mind, he must perfectly understand its secret agencies ; that he in whose essence man lives and moves and has his being, must behold every motion, and feel every stirring of the human spirit. "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear ? He that formed the eye, shall he not see ?" Let us, then, ponder the fact of God's exhaustive knowledge of man's soul, that we may realize it, and thereby come under its solemn power and impression. For all religion, all holy and reverential fear of God, rises and sets, as in an atmosphere, in the thought : "Thou, God, seest me."

1. In analyzing and estimating the Divine knowledge of the human soul, we find, in the first place, that God accurately and exhaustively knows *all that man knows of himself*.

Every man in a Christian land who is in the habit of frequenting the house of God possesses more or less of that self-knowledge of which we have spoken. He thinks of the moral character of some of his own thoughts. He reflects upon the moral quality of some of his own feelings. He considers the ultimate tendency of some of his own actions. In other words, there is a part of his inward and his outward life with which he is uncommonly well acquainted—of which he has a distinct perception. There are some thoughts of his mind at which he blushes at the very time of their origin, because he is vividly aware what they are and what they mean. There are some emotions of his heart at which he trembles and recoils at the *very moment* of their uprising, because he perceives clearly that *they involve a very malignant depravity*. There are some act-

ings of his will of whose wickedness he is painfully conscious at the very instant of their rush and movement. We are not called upon, here, to say how many of a man's thoughts, feelings, and determinations, are thus subjected to his self-inspection at the very time of their origin, and are known in the clear light of self-knowledge. We are not concerned, at this point, with the amount of this man's self-inspection and self-knowledge. We are only saying that there is some experience such as this in his personal history, and that he does know something of himself, at the very time of action, with a clearness and a distinctness that makes him start, or blush, or fear.

Now we say, that in reference to all this intimate self-knowledge, all this best part of a man's information respecting himself, he is not superior to God. He may be certain that in no particular does he know more of himself than the Searcher of hearts knows. He may be an uncommonly thoughtful person, and little of what is done within his soul may escape his notice—nay, we will make the extreme supposition that he arrests every thought as it rises, and looks at it; that he analyzes every sentiment as it swells his heart; that he scrutinizes every purpose as it determines his will—even if he should have such a thorough and profound self-knowledge as this, God knows him equally profoundly, and equally thoroughly. Nay, more, this process of self-inspection may go on indefinitely, and the man may grow more and more thoughtful, and obtain an everlasting augmenting knowledge of what he is and what he does, so that it shall seem to him that he is going down so far along that path which the vulture's eye hath not seen, is penetrating so deeply into those dim and shadowy regions of consciousness where the external life takes its very first start, as to be beyond the reach of any eye, and the ken of any intelligence but his own, and then he may be sure that God understands the thought that is afar off and deep down, and that at this lowest range and plane in his experience he besets him behind and before.

Or, this man, like the most of mankind, may be an unreflecting person. Then, in this case, thoughts, feelings, and purposes are continually rising up within his soul like the

clouds and exhalations of an evaporating deluge, and at the time of their rise he subjects them to no scrutiny of conscience, and is not pained in the least by their moral character and significance. He lacks self-knowledge altogether at these points in his history. But, notice that the fact that he is not self-inspecting at these points cannot destroy the fact that he is acting at them. The fact that he is not a spectator of his own transgression does not alter the fact that he is the author of it. If this man, for instance, thinks over his worldly affairs on God's holy day, and, perhaps, in God's holy house, with such an absorption and such a pleasure that he entirely drowns the voice of conscience while he is so doing, and self-inspection is banished for the time, it will not do for him to plead this absence of a distinct and painful consciousness of what his mind was actually doing in the house of God, and upon the Lord's day, as the palliative and excuse of his wrong thoughts. If this man, again, indulges in an envious or a sensual emotion with such an energy and entireness as for the time being to preclude all action of the higher powers of reason and self-reflection, so that for the time being he is not in the least troubled by a sense of his wickedness, it will be no excuse for him at the eternal bar that he was not thinking of his envy or his lust at the time when he felt it. And therefore it is that accountableness covers the whole field of human agency, and God holds us responsible for our thoughtless sin, as well as for our deliberate transgression.

In the instance, then, of the thoughtless man, in the case where there is little or no self-examination, God unquestionably knows the man as well as the man knows himself. The Omniscient One is certainly possessed of an amount of knowledge equal to that small modicum which is all that a rational and immortal soul can boast of in reference to itself. But the vast majority of mankind fall into this class. The self-examiners are very few in comparison with the millions who possess the power to look into their hearts, but who rarely, or never do so. The great God our Judge, then, surely knows the mass of men, in their down-sitting and uprising, with a know-

ledge that is equal to their own. And thus do we establish our first position, that God knows all that the man knows; God's knowledge is equal to the very best part of man's knowledge.

2. We come, now, to the second position: that *God accurately and exhaustively knows all that man might, but does not, know of himself.*

Although the Creator designed that every man should thoroughly understand his own heart, and gave him the power of self-inspection that he might use it faithfully, and apply it constantly, yet man is extremely ignorant of himself. Mankind, says an old writer, are nowhere less at home than at home. Very few persons practise serious self-examination at all; and none employ the power of self-inspection with that carefulness and sedulity with which they ought. Hence men generally, and unrenewed men always, are unacquainted with much that goes on within their own minds and hearts. Though it is sin and self-will, though it is thought and feeling, and purpose and desire, that is going on and taking place during all these years of religious indifference, yet the agent himself, so far as a sober reflection upon the moral character of the process, and a distinct perception of the dreadful issue of it, are concerned, is much of the time as destitute of self-knowledge as an irrational brute itself. For were sinful men constantly self-examining, they would be constantly in torment. Men can be happy in sin only so long as they can sin without thinking of it. The instant they begin to perceive and understand what they are doing, they begin to feel the fang of the worm. If the frivolous, wicked world which now takes so much pleasure in its wickedness could be forced to do here what it will be forced to do hereafter—namely, to eye its sin while it commits it, to think of what it is doing while it does it—the billows of the lake of fire would roll in upon time, and from gay Paris and luxurious Vienna there would instantaneously ascend the wailing cry of Pandemonium.

But it is not so at present. Men here upon earth are continually thinking sinful thoughts and cherishing sinful feelings, and yet

they are not continually in hell. On the contrary, "they are not in trouble as other men are, neither are they plagued like other men. Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish." This proves that they are self-ignorant; that they know neither their sin nor its bitter end. They sin without the consciousness of sin, and hence are happy in it. Is it not so in our own personal experience? Have there not been in the past ten years of our own mental history long trains of thought—sinful thought—and vast processions of feelings and imaginings—sinful feelings and imaginings—that have trailed over the spaces of the soul, but which have been as unwatched and unseen by the self-inspecting eye of conscience, as the caravans of the African desert have been, during the same period, by the eye of our sense? We have not felt a pang of guilt every single time that we have thought a wrong thought; yet we should have felt one inevitably had we scrutinized every such single thought. Our face has not flushed with crimson in every particular instance in which we have exercised a lustful emotion; yet it would have done so had we carefully noted every such emotion. A distinct self-knowledge has by no means run parallel with all our sinful activity; has by no means been co-extensive with it. We perform vastly more than we inspect. We have sinned vastly more than we have been aware of at the time.

Even the Christian in whom this unreflecting species of life and conduct has given way, somewhat, to a thoughtful and vigilant life, knows and acknowledges that perfection is not yet come. As he casts his eye over even his regenerate and illuminated life, and sees what a small amount of sin has been distinctly detected, keenly felt, and heartily confessed, in comparison with that large amount of sin which he knows he must have committed during this long period of incessant action of mind, heart, and limbs, he finds no repose for his misgivings with respect to the final examination and account, except by enveloping himself yet more entirely in the ample folds of his Redeemer's righteousness; except by hiding himself yet more *profoundly* in the cleft of that Rock of Ages which protects the

chief of sinners from the insufferable splendours and terrors of the Divine glory and holiness as it passes by. Even the Christian knows that he must have committed many sins in thoughtless moments and hours—many sins of which he was not deliberately thinking at the time of their commission—and must pray with David, “Cleanse thou me from secret faults.” The functions and operations of memory evince that such is the case. Are we not sometimes, in our serious hours when memory is busy, convinced of sins which at the time of their commission were wholly unaccompanied with a sense of their sinfulness? The act in this instance was performed blindly, without self-inspection, and therefore without self-conviction. Ten years, we will say, have intervened—years of new activity, and immensely varied experiences. And now the magic power of recollection sets us back, once more, at that point of responsible action, and bids us do what we did not do at the time—analyze our performance and feel consciously guilty, experience the first sensation of remorse for what we did ten years ago. Have we not been vividly reminded that upon such an occasion, and at such time, we were angry, or proud, but, at the time when the emotion was swelling our veins, were not filled with that clear and painful sense of its turpitude which now attends the recollection of it? The re-exhibition of an action in memory, as in a mirror, is often accompanied with a distinct apprehension of its moral character that formed no part of the experience of the agent while absorbed in the hot and hasty original action itself. And when we remember how immense are the stores of memory, and what an amount of sin has been committed in hours of thoughtlessness and moral indifference, what prayer is more natural and warm than the supplication: “Search me, O God, and try me, and see what evil ways there are within me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

But the careless unenlightened man, as we have before remarked, leads a life almost entirely destitute of self-inspection and self-knowledge. He sins constantly. He does only evil, and that continually, as did man before the deluge; for he is constantly

acting. A living self-moving soul like his cannot cease action if it would. And yet the current is all one way. Day after day sends up its clouds of sensual, worldly, selfish thoughts. Week after week pours onward its stream of low-born, corrupt, unspiritual feelings. Year after year accumulates that hardening mass of carnal-mindedness and distaste for religion which is sometimes a more insuperable obstacle to the truth than positive faults and vices which startle and shock the conscience. And yet the man thinks nothing about all this action of his mind and heart. He does not subject it to any self-inspection. If he should, for but one single hour, be lifted up to the eminence from which all this current of self-will and moral agency may be seen and surveyed in its real character and significance, he would start back as if brought to the brink of hell. But he is not thus lifted up. He continues to use and abuse his mental and his moral faculties, but, for most of his probation, with all the blindness and heedlessness of a mere animal instinct.

There is, then, a vast amount of sin committed without self-inspection, and, consequently, without any distinct perception at the time that it is sin. The Christian will find himself feeling guilty for the first time for a transgression that occurred far back in the past, and will need a fresh application of atoning blood. The sinner will find, at some period or other, that remorse is fastening its tooth in his conscience for a vast amount of sinful thought, feeling, desire, and motive, that took origin in the unembarrassed days of religious thoughtlessness and worldly enjoyment.

For, think you, that the insensible sinner is always to be thus insensible that this power of self-inspection is eternally to "rust unused"? What a tremendous revelation will one day be made to an unreflecting transgressor, simply because he is a man and not a brute, has lived a human life, and is endowed with the power of self-knowledge, whether he has used it or not! What a terrific vision it will be for him when the *limitless line of his sins* which he has not yet distinctly examined, and

thought of, and repented of, shall be made to pass in slow procession before that inward eye which he has wickedly kept shut so long ! Tell us not of the disclosures that shall be made when the sea shall give up the dead that are in it, and the graves shall open and surrender their dead. What are these material disclosures when compared with the revelations of self-knowledge ! What is all this external display, sombre and terrible as it will be to the outward eye, when compared with all that internal revealing that will be made to a hitherto thoughtless soul when, of a sudden, in the day of judgment, its deepest caverns shall heave in unison with the material convulsions of the day, and shall send forth to judgment their long slumbering and hidden iniquity ; when the sepulchres of its own memory shall burst open, and give up the sin that has long laid buried there, in heedless and guilty forgetfulness, awaiting this second resurrection !

For (to come back to the unfolding of the subject and the movement of the argument) God perfectly knows all that man might, but does not, know of himself. Though the transgressor is ignorant of much of his sin, because at the time of its commission he sins blindly as well as wilfully, and unreflectingly as well as freely ; and though the transgressor has forgotten much of that small amount of sin of which he was conscious, and by which he was pained, at the the time of its perpetration ; though on the side of man the powers of self-inspection and memory have accomplished so little towards the preservation of man's sin, yet God knows it all and remembers it all. He compasseth man's path and his lying-down, and is acquainted with all his ways. " There is nothing covered, therefore, that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. Whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light ; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops." The Creator of the human mind has control ever its powers of self-inspection and of memory ; and when the proper time comes he will compel these endowments to perform their legitimate functions, and

do their appointed work. The torturing self-survey will begin, never more to end. The awful recollection will commence, endlessly to go on.

And here let us for a moment look upon the bright as well as the dark side of this subject ; for if God's exhaustive knowledge of the human heart wakens dread in one of its aspects, it starts infinite hope in another. If that Being has gone down into these depths of human depravity, and seen it with a more abhorring glance than could ever shoot from a finite eye, and yet has returned with a cordial offer to forgive it all, and a hearty proffer to cleanse it all away, then we can lift up the eye in adoration and in hope. There has been an infinite forbearance and condescension. The worst has been seen, and that, too, by the holiest of beings, and yet eternal glory is offered to us ! God knows, from personal examination, the worthlessness of human character with a thoroughness and intensity of knowledge of which man has no conception ; and yet, in the light of this knowledge, in the very flame of this intuition, he has devised a plan of mercy and redemption. Do not think, then, because of your present ignorance of your guilt and corruption, that the incarnation and death of the Son of God was unnecessary, and that that costly blood of atonement which you are treading under foot wet the rocks of Calvary for a peccadillo. Could you but, for a moment only, know yourself *altogether* and *exhaustively*, as the Author of this redemption knows you, you would cry out, in the words of a far holier man than you are, "I am undone." If you could but see guilt as God sees it, you would also see, with him, that nothing but an infinite Passion can expiate it. If you could but fathom the human heart as God fathoms it, you would know, as he knows, that nothing less than regeneration can purify its fountains of uncleanness, and cleanse it from its ingrain corruption.

Thus have we seen that God knows man altogether ; that he knows all that man knows of himself, and all that man might, but does not yet, know of himself. The Searcher of hearts *knows* all the thoughts that we have thought upon, all the

reflections that we have reflected upon, all the experience that we have ourselves analysed and inspected. And he also knows that far larger part of our life which we have not yet subjected to the scrutiny of self-examination—all those thoughts, feelings, desires, and motives, innumerable as they are, of which we took no heed at the time of their origin and existence, and which we suppose, perhaps, we shall hear no more of again. Whither, then, shall we go from God's spirit? or whither shall we flee from his presence and his knowledge? If we ascend up into heaven, he is there, and knows us perfectly. If we make our bed in hell, behold he is there, and reads the secret thoughts and feelings of our heart. The darkness hideth not from him; our ignorance does not affect his knowledge; the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to him.

This great truth which we have been considering obtains a yet more serious emphasis, and a yet more solemn power over the mind, when we take into view the character of the Being who thus searches our hearts, and is acquainted with all our ways. Who of us would not be filled with uneasiness, if he knew that an imperfect fellow-creature were looking constantly into his soul? Would not the flush of shame often burn upon our cheek, if we knew that a sinful man like ourselves were watching all the feelings and thoughts that are rising within us? Should we not be more circumspect than we are, if men were able mutually to search each other's hearts? How often does a man change his course of conduct, when he discovers, accidentally, that his neighbour knows what he is doing!

But it is not an imperfect fellow-man, it is not a perfect angel, who besets us behind and before, and is acquainted with all our ways. It is the immaculate God himself. It is he before whom archangels veil their faces, and the burning seraphim cry, "Holy!" It is he in whose sight the pure cerulean heavens are not clean, and whose eyes are a flame of fire devouring all iniquity. We are beheld, in all this process of sin, be it blind or be it intelligent, by Infinite Purity. We are not, therefore, to suppose that God contemplates *this our life of sin with the dull indifference of an Epicurean deity; that he looks into our souls, all this*

while, from mere curiosity, and with no moral emotions towards us. The God who knows us altogether is the Holy One of Israel, whose wrath is both real, and revealed, against all unrighteousness.

If, therefore, we connect the holy nature and pure essence of God with all this unceasing and unerring inspection of the human soul, does not the truth which we have been considering speak with a bolder emphasis, and acquire an additional power to impress and solemnize the mind? When we realize that the Being who is watching us at every instant, and in every act and element of our existence, is the very same Being who revealed himself amidst the lightnings of Sinai as hating sin and not clearing the thoughtless guilty, do not our prospects at the bar of justice look dark and fearful? For who of the race of man is holy enough to stand such an inspection? Who of the sons of men will prove pure in such a furnace?

Are we not, then, brought by this truth close up to the central doctrine of Christianity, and made to see our need of the atonement and righteousness of the Redeemer? How can we endure such a scrutiny as God is instituting into our character and conduct? What can we say, in the day of reckoning, when the Searcher of hearts shall make known to us all that he knows of us? What can we do in that day which shall reveal the thoughts and the estimates of the Holy One respecting us?

Find out your sin, then. God will forgive all that is found. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. The great God delights to forgive, and is waiting to forgive. But sin must be seen by the sinner before it can be pardoned by the Judge. If you refuse at this point; if you hide yourself from yourself; if you preclude all feeling and conviction upon the subject of sin by remaining ignorant of it; if you continue to live an easy, thoughtless life in sin, then you cannot be forgiven, and the measure of God's love with which he would have blessed you had you searched yourself and repented, will be the measure of God's righteous wrath with which he will search you and condemn you because you have not.

WICKEDNESS OF THE HEART.

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"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked : who can know it ?"—JER. xvii. 9.

THE heart is spoken of in our text as being the seat of the moral affections—the source of moral or immoral character and tendency. The term is used in its generic sense, and is nearly if not quite synonymous with nature. This, indeed, is the more frequent significance given to it in the Scriptures. All through the Bible you find it employed to denote the whole nature of man. As a noun of multitude covers all the individuals which come within the reach of its application, so this term "heart" includes each single element or principle in human nature which has a moral bias or character.

When, therefore, it is asserted in Scripture that the *heart* is deceitful and wicked, it is the same as if it were affirmed that the *nature* of man, *human* nature, taken as a whole, in all its moral relations and aptitudes, partakes of these evil qualities. The charge is not brought against any individual exponent of that nature, but against the nature itself. It does not assert that human nature in the life of the thief or highwayman or murderer is deceitful and wicked, but it charges that human nature, wherever found and however expressed, in its hereditary and root elements and principles, is wicked, and intensely wicked at that.

Now, I do not propose to-day to attempt by direct proof to

establish this assertion. If any of you do not believe it, my immediate suggestion to you is that you look within your own heart, and see what sort of condition, morally considered, it is in. You need not read books, or go abroad in search of facts, to ascertain your wickedness. As the eye takes in colours, so the conscience recognizes the presence of guilt. You see it in yourself, and by observation you discover it in others. A chemist takes a drop of water from the ocean, and, by his analysis of it, ascertains the composition of the whole mass. So man, as one drop in the vast ocean of moral consciousness, by examination of his own heart, learns what is the moral condition of all. There is too much of studying sin from the outside. There is too much preaching which takes up moral obliquity as an intellectual proposition, which stands or falls on the strength of verbal demonstration. Is the evidence of sin found alone in the Scriptures? Why fabricate an argument out of proof-texts? The proof of man's guilt is man's acts, and not what any book says about him. The book to read is the book of your life, with the days you have lived for the leaves, and where every leaf is marred by more than one blot. If a man says that he is not sinful, must I run to Scripture to prove it? No. When a man with the smell of whiskey strong in his breath tells me that he does not drink, must I run to the State House and turn to the statute of prohibition to prove it? Why, no. He is himself the all-sufficient witness against himself. Out of him, with the very utterance of the assertion, came the proof of its falsity. So it is with this matter of personal moral obliquity, this lack of individual holiness, this lapsed and fallen condition of human nature. Books do not prove it; verbal demonstrations do not prove it: it proves itself. As a turbid stretch of water denotes impurity above, so man's words and thoughts and acts show that the source, his heart, is not morally right.

Now in this discourse I do not, as I said, wish to enter into any argument to establish the text. It is a hard, rough, and thorn-like passage. It rises out of the preceding context, very

like as some islands rise out of the placid surface of our Northern lakes, vexing the easy-going waters with their projections of ragged granite, and offering to the eye of the hunter who would beat them for game the harsh opposition of thickets. No, we will not push in and tear our way through this thorny text; we will only paddle around it, as it were—study its rough suggestiveness in search of some safe and profitable application.

The charge of deceitfulness is brought in our text against the human heart. It is a grave charge. To deceive any one is to lead him astray; to cause him to doubt what is true, and believe what is false; to delude and entrap him to his lasting hurt. Now, this is a very sweeping allegation. I will show you how grave it is by an illustration.

To an artist, that is a fearful disturbance in vision which transposes colours, causing white to appear black, and black white. What correct and remunerative picture may he ever paint again? How shall he ever again mingle his colours, and from his nicely-prepared mixtures make the canvas to glow with the roseate hues of morning or the star-lighted splendours of the night? Out of what future possibility shall he fashion his wreath? By what application can he win even his physical support? He cannot. That optical delusion, that deceitfulness of vision, has dashed, in one single hour, hope, wealth, and honour to the ground. But what is the eye, either in its uses or dignity, beside the soul? What is that disturbance which affects the fleshly and the temporal, compared with that which deludes the spiritual and the eternal? Let blindness fall upon us, and the gates of sight be closed for ever to the scenes of earth and time: only leave with us unhampered faith in God, undiminished affection for him, undying hope in the hereafter, and we will live and rejoice in that hope until the healing finger shall touch our sightless orbs, and on our opening eyes shall break the glories of the heavenly world.

But if the heart be diseased; if that invaluable element which enables us to decide as to what is right and wrong be affected;

if our affections conspire to lead us astray ; above all, if this deceitfulness and evil bias affect not only this, but our future life—then language is too weak to describe the calamity it inflicts on all ; then are we like men exposed to an unmeasured and immeasurable evil.

Now, one of the proofs of the existence of this principle in the heart is, that it leads one to put a false estimate upon himself. It was in this form that sin found its first expression in Satan. An unseemly pride possessed him. He was ambitious to be equal with God. An inordinate desire to match the Infinite stirred him into that wild and unprecedented rebellion. Sin is always bold with a boldness born of an exaggerated idea of its own prowess. Hence its audacity. Hence its swagger. Hence, sinfulness and pride in the Scripture are analogous terms, as in Prov. xvi. 5, “The proud in heart are an abomination to the Lord.” What sin most hates is true humility—the reverent confession of weakness before God. Its whole aim is to push men to the other extreme ; to blind their eyes to their own emptiness, and make them feel that they need nothing. Now, you may go up and down and around the whole earth, and you cannot find a wicked man who is a humble man. Sin has a certain complacency peculiar to itself. It contemplates with a sense of unctuous satisfaction its well-filled granaries, its stocks and bonds, and, smoothing the velvet of its raiment, exclaims, “Soul, take thy ease !” Yea, more : you may canvass all the cities of the world, and all grades of vice, and you will find that sin has a style of contentment in it. Men and women are by it dragged into a kind of insensibility touching the future. They have no projection to their thoughts. The grave is to them a movable point, ever receding as they advance ; and at fifty they are no nearer to it than at thirty. Death is made, by the deceitfulness of sin, to appear as a far-off and remote event ; and never until the shadows of the valley which at last envelop all are actually settling around them do they realize that they, too, must die.

My hearer, is this to any extent true of you ? Does the grave appear to you as too far off to require immediate

attention? Are you counting as sure that which is most uncertain—life? Are you delaying what should first of all be attended to? If so, I submit that you are not wise. This word of caution is for you. It is God's warning to your soul. Give it due heed, lest you do worse.

Now, the text charges that the heart is not only deceitful, but desperately wicked. This is the culmination of the charge. Let us look at it a moment.

In old Saxon, "wicked" signified "bewitched, possessed with the very spirit of evil." It is one of those words which carry us back to the days of our forefathers, when superstitions abounded, and the belief prevailed that the powers of evil, and Satan himself, entered into men and women, and possessed them. And I am not sure that they were far out of the way. I have been at times rather superstitious myself in view of exhibitions I have seen some people make of themselves! Now, this idea that a wicked man is a bewitched man, a man of whose heart Satan has taken possession, whose tongue he directs, whose bitterness he prompts, assists the mind in its conception of the origin and nature of evil. It puts one on the right track, and, by a short sharp race, runs the game to earth.

In modern language, "wicked" means "contrary to the moral law." A man who steals or swears or covets is a wicked man. A man who is addicted to vice of any sort; whose heart is alienated from rectitude and God; whose idea of duty is born, not of the quick sense of right, but of what is politic and expedient—such a man is wicked; and if he is far gone in these directions, if his moral obliquity has become a habit, then is he a *desperately* wicked man; that is, wicked beyond hope, and to the very verge of despair.

This charge is susceptible of proof. The history of the world proves it. What is that history? You all know. You are intelligent; you are well-read; and you know that the past has been a past of blood. From the time of Cain, brother has smitten brother, and sin and death dominated over mankind.

There have been centuries whose history might be expressed by a groan. The life of many generations might be represented with a shackle for its symbol. The shriek of pain, the murmur of the oppressed, the cry of baffled vengeance, and the unanswered prayer, epitomize volumes of laboured narrative. The race has marched to its enlarged liberty and its higher life as men march across a battle-field, the blaze of batteries in their face, and the turf beneath their feet moist with precious blood.

There is an effort being made in this country to confuse and bewilder the public mind on some of the rudimental, underlying questions of men's spiritual condition. The languages of the world are ransacked in order to find some word, some phrase, some definition, to soften, tone down, and emasculate the scriptural idea of sin. They hate the term. And well such teachers may; for if there is such a thing as *sin* in the Bible sense—a positive, voluntary transgression against right principle and salutary law—then all their splendid superstructure of philosophy falls to the ground. This they know and feel. Hence their efforts, hence their anxiety, to explain away and weaken men's convictions on just this point. They call it a "disease," a "misadjustment of the faculties," an "unfortunate but irresponsible tendency." Any term, any phrase, is welcome, so that it banish from their vocabulary of utterance the terrible word, which, if spoken, has a concussive power in it sufficient to demolish all their elaborate structure of deceit. But, friends, there stands the word; there is the ugly fact—the ghostly visitation which mars their feast with its unbidden, unwished-for entrance. What an uphill work it must be for a man to argue before an audience that there is no such thing as sin, when every man and woman before the speaker knows and feels that he has sinned, not once, not twice, but many times! How can I tell you that you have never sinned, when your own consciences upbraid you? How can I tell you that you are spotless, when nought but the covering of your secrecy prevents your moral discolouration from standing out palpably to sight? Can

forget that you have memories? Can I go down, and, standing over against your jails, declare that there is no transgression of law, no voluntary and premeditated crime? Why, that philosophy is inconsistent with your civil structure. It flies in the face of every legal enactment on your statute book. It makes your judges and your officers at court but so many masked players in a play, who act with feigned gravity the parts these theological comedians have allotted them. What a huge farce it is to try a man because he is afflicted with disease! what broad fun in the assertion that we shut a man up in Boston, in a prison-cell, if he has "misadjusted faculties"! what grim humour in the statement that a man was swung off from the gallows and choked to death because he was afflicted with an "hereditary tendency"! Did Theodore Parker hold that the slave-trade was carried on by innocent imbeciles, by people suffering under a disease which deprived them of all blameworthiness in the matter? No; he called them "monsters of wickedness," "intelligent men-stealers," "criminals before God and man." He smote them with words hot as fire, with invective which burnt its way into whatever it touched, invective which was wicked and cruel in itself unless it was deserved. He was orthodox enough when he talked about slavery. When he heard the bay of the blood-hound; saw the panting slave-woman, with her babe in her arms, dragged down by the savage brute; when he heard the thud of the lash, knotted with junks of lead, on her bare, palpitating back, and looked into the face of the master standing by, smoking his cigar, quietly enjoying the spectacle of torture—the screams, the groans, the blood, of the woman—he forgot his theology, his poetic theories; and with flaming cheek and flashing eye, he held him up before the intelligence and virtue of the old Bay State as the "embodiment of *devilishness*, and an outrage upon humanity."

My friends, this was the conviction of the man when, with unprejudiced eyes, he saw the action of wicked men and their character. He knew, and we all know, that men are not so diseased that they are not responsible for their acts. There is no such

misadjustment of our faculties as to render us unaccountable. We are not imbecile; we are not lunatic. Our wills are not weakened to idiocy; our minds are not blinded as not to see. We are all capable. We have a will to decide, a reason to consider, a moral sense to instruct. We are creatures of premeditation and device. We think and plan, we accept and reject. Every mark of ability is seen in our conduct. And beyond all else is our consciousness, which testifies both to our power and guilt. More than once in our lives have we done wrong—done it in spite of knowledge and the outspoken rebukes of our conscience. We did the act, knowing, feeling, that it was wrong; and the knowledge and feeling remain to this day.

You see the importance of this position; for, if true, it changes entirely our position before God from what it is if it is not true. If we have voluntarily transgressed the laws of right, if we have knowingly acted against God's wish and will, then is the wickedness of the heart neither accidental in its character, nor slight in degree. Its depravity is seen to be native, and its guilt positive and intense; and our consciences, when they condemn us, only anticipate the decision of God.

My friends, this is precisely the fact of the case. Our consciences do only anticipate God's judgment; and the Bible, as vindicated by our own consciousness, is true when it says, "We are all under the law. We have all gone astray. There is none that doeth good; no, not one."

But, friends, if you would know and tremble at the wickedness of the heart, look within. No measuring of the surface can sound the ocean. Down, straight down, into the unlighted depths, must the plummet go. Fathom after fathom must it descend or ever it can touch the bottom of the deep, and gauge the distance downward. So is it with the human heart: each man must cast the lead of investigation for himself, and note the depth of his depravity. A man who stands on the bank along the verge of rapids can never realize the swiftness of the current: he must shove off into it, feel the dip of the boat downward, feel the pressure of the air on either cheek as his

WICKEDNESS OF THE HEART.

face cleaves through it, hear the hiss and rasp of the wind under him, seize the oars and measure his strength against it, and by his best efforts barely hold his own perhaps not even that, before he can ever conceive much less estimate, the rush and sweep and power of rapids. So it is with our estimate of sin. The man who merely sees it as exhibited in others, the man who reads of it in his morning paper, who studies it as manifested in society at large, knows nothing of it. If he would know of its violence, of its cruel persistence, of its down-sweeping and destructive vehemence, let him look, not at others, but at himself; let him recall his own experiences and struggles.

Every life has its crisis, every soul its Gethsemane, when friends sleep, and powers of darkness assail and circle it with horror. Take your life, friend, and single out some such hour; an hour in which virtue and honour, peace of conscience, and faith in God, stood trembling in the balance; an hour when unexpectedly, and by no fault of yours, the power of evil ambushed your path, and set upon you on all sides at once, taking you by surprise; an hour in which all dear to you, all which might make life honourable or death peaceful, all that might crimson the portal of the grave, and in the azure above it reveal the anchor and the dove, reeled and staggered even unto falling. Praise the mercy of God to-day if in that hour of wind and rain the downbeating and onrushing violence of it swept not your house from its foundations. But in the remembered trials of that hour, in the struggle and agony of it, in the resistance it elicited; in the bravery it demanded, in the pressure it put upon your virtue, beheld the power of sin!

Or, again, leave a heart to its own natural tendencies; let its natural proneness to sin go on unhindered unto its own supremely evil consummation; let no restraints of virtuous education be put upon it; let it be unhampered by the fear of public opinion; remove the obstructions which legal enactments heave up in its murderous course; take home and the school-house, the voice of prayer and the entreaty of friendship, the

admonition of wisdom, the pleadings of love, and the restraining sight of virtue, out of the world—and into what anarchy, what violence, what barbarism, what licentiousness, what tiger-like ferocity, would not the world plunge!

Go down into North Street, go down to your House of Correction, go to the cellars and garrets and brothels and dens of your city, and study the faces of those of either sex who burrow under the very roots of your metropolis; notice their faces, bloated with drink, or hollow with want; mark their bodies, out of which the divine spirit of cleanliness and decency has departed; look into their eyes, in the lure and craving and cunning and effrontery of which every lurking devil of lust and appetite and lawlessness abides; take up that infant, with its sharp, pinched face and fleshless limbs, fitter for the coffin than the cradle—go, I say, and standing on the marge of this moral cesspool, with your feet in the muck and mire of its rottenness, look over into this sty of human animalism, which churches that ransack the globe for a spot to send a missionary tolerate under their very nose, and see in all this foul and purulent mass of crime and corruption into what a depth of depravity the human heart, left to the law of its own natural tendencies, will plunge and sink and stay.

Well, is it owing to any redeeming quality in sin that this entire city is not like North Street? Take the world, and note the causes which have made one-half of it moral and civilized and humane. Observe what an infinite purchase-capacity God has been compelled to develop in order to heave human nature up even to that level of virtue on which society can exist, and estimate into what darkness and brutality the world would speedily lapse were the checks and restraints of knowledge and law and the Bible withdrawn.

Rejoice, Christians and non-professors alike, that no such thing can occur. The future may bring many a misfortune to man, but it can never bring such a calamity as that. Between the human heart and its natural tendency to wrong-doing a *mightier* than human power has taken its stand. Between the

cradle and the grave are the merciful visitations of God ; and there will they be for ever. Along that road which is broad, which leadeth to destruction, and into which many shall enter, the angels of God, and those servants of his like unto angels, lacking not voice of entreaty, lacking not gesture of warning, shall stand, turning many from death unto life, snatching many as brands from the burning ; and the souls of those who are saved will be jewels in the crowns of their rejoicing for ever.

My friends, the phrase "desperately wicked" is one of those descriptive phrases, one of those scraps of suggestive word-painting, most difficult for the mind to comprehend. The mind goes up to it as a man goes cautiously up to an old shaft, deep and dark, and to the eye bottomless. He stretches himself at full length along the edge, and peers shrinkingly over into it, but starts shudderingly back as a rush of cold, damp, impure air beats up into his face. He selects a stone and casts it in. It bounds from side to side, publishing its progress downward by ever-decreasing echoes ; and when the last faint sound has reached the ear, it leaves upon the brain the impression that it is still descending—whither, or how far, the listener can make no estimate.

Well, something like to that is the chasm in moral descent which this phrase opens. This pit of "desperate wickedness"—who can sound it? Call it hell, and drop your thought down into it, and many suggestions of horror, like muffled echoes, rise at first ; but soon you reach a point where these fail, and no sound is upsent from its stupendous depth, and no thought comes like a swiftly-flying messenger to tell where lies the bottom of that dark passage and ever-darkening depth to which the wicked sink—or rather, I should say, into which the wicked are ever sinking ; for sin is one interminable declension, an unchecked and everlasting descent. It has no fixed state or condition. It is motion downward ; motion ever accelerated ; motion never arrested. Hence the pit which is its home is bottomless. Hence the wicked are ever growing more wicked, and the devilish more and more depraved.

You have seen the operations of this law; your eyes have seen the development of this gravitating principle in depravity going on day by day in people—aye, and at times felt it in your own bosoms.

Have not all of you had periods of declension? Can you not recall one and another season in your lives in which the inclination of your thoughts and acts were downward—a season in which you grew less honest, less circumspect, less pure, less careful? You feel to-day that you are a better man or woman than you were then. You were not lost; you did not make a castaway of yourself; but you know now that you came near doing it—that, but for some intervening restraint and mercy, you would have gone on and on until you would have taken one step too far, and been lost. You waded far out enough to feel the pressure of that terrible current down which the wealth and honour and bodies of many men are being hurled to-day.

In view of that wickedness of which the heart of man is capable; in view of its hidden as well as its expressed transgressions; in view of its inward taint and tumours, its veiled leprosies and manifold deceits, well might the prophet exclaim, “Who can know it?” Who shall ever thread the labyrinth of sinful motives through which the babe passed from the cradle to the gallows? Who shall explore the dark caverns and recesses of human thought, and tell to the upper world what monsters, obnoxious to the sight and horrible, are born and nourished there? Who shall force the entrance to those subterranean passages of man’s sinful nature, and drag to light the evil ministers that wait on murder, and blow hot the torch of conflagration? Who shall prove himself that chemist of character able to gather the sediment of our dispositions, and, by analysis, trace each impure combination, each low desire, each group of carnal craving, to their source, detect their basal elements, write out their law of growth, and catalogue them properly in the order of evil? If knowledge sufficient were unto any, who might endure the wrack and torture of the effort? No one. *The human heart is a mystery; it is a secret with the secrecy of*

shame and the caution of undetected guilt; and the judgment-day will be a day to astonish the universe because of the revelations it will make. The vindication of a penalty which now appals some men will be seen at the unmasking and exhibition of a depravity more appalling yet.

Who, then, "shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

I thank God that, through Jesus Christ, I and all may be delivered. Through him man can obtain not alone remission of the penalty, but what to every noble nature seems far better: deliverance from the taint and dominion of sin. I ask you who have never felt the quickening of the Spirit, who have never received into your hearts any divine impulse, to look at your natures thoughtfully a moment. Observe how full of vain and wicked imaginations are your minds; how essentially selfish are your plans; how sordid, compared with the feelings of the heavenly-minded, are your desires. When you have thus soberly analyzed your own natures, look abroad over the world; behold its iniquities, its lewdness, its cruelties, its oppressions, its wars and bloodshed, the vulture-like aptitudes which go out in search of pure things as hawks leave their dark perches and sail forth hunting for doves, and then tell me if man is not "desperately wicked"; tell me if any theory, any philosophy, must not be false that does not start out with a full and clear recognition that man is depraved.

There is a strong current setting against this generation, the tendency of which is to wash men and women out into a sea of loose opinions and looser practices. The old anchorages where our fathers outrode so many storms in safety are being deserted, albeit they lie within, and are enclosed round about by the headlands of God's truth. Few would call me, I presume, a conservative; and yet I have not to-day, and never have had, any sympathy with a radicalism that smites both gods and mummies alike. And I call upon each of you in your respective spheres, and according to the measure of your ability, to resist every tendency calculated to add to our present recklessness and impatience at wise and salutary restraint. I see that the old

traditions are losing their hold on the public mind ; that the old customs are passing away ; that the old conservative habits of thought are dying out. I do not lament it. God allows nothing to perish until it has answered its use. I only pray that they may be as the corn when it is cast into the earth, whose vital principle finds a fresher and nobler expression in dying, and discovers that death means nothing worse than a multiplication of its own life. The shuck is cast off ; but it is cast off because the expanded and expanding germ within can no longer tolerate the bondage of its pressure. The future will be fuller in its girth, and nobler of stature, than the past. It will have strength and wisdom to do what the past could not do. It will be wise with that wisdom which comes alone from a knowledge of the failures and imperfections of the dead. I care not for forms ; each generation has its own : I desire only that the truth which they express be cherished. The mode of expression and application will be changed from time to time ; but let the doctrine itself, in all its integrity, abide.

TAKING THE STONE AWAY.

BY REV. CHARLES F. DEEMS, D.D.

"Jesus said, Take ye away the stone."—JOHN xi. 39.

THERE are some lessons suggested by the command of Jesus at the revivication of Lazarus which seem to me very important.

The first is that God never performs an unnecessary act. We know most of God in Jesus. More than in nature, more than in any verbal revelation, God is manifested in Jesus the Christ. It is a very mellifluous line of the poet which tells us to "look through nature up to nature's God;" but there is not a particle of practical good sense in it. No man ever did it. Nature seems rather a veil which the Creator has drawn over himself, so that no one would know that there is a God underneath unless he somehow revealed the fact. "For the invisible things of him are clearly seen from the creation of the world," because "God hath shown" "that which may be known of him." This is Paul's idea in Romans i. But in Jesus is God manifest in the flesh. The heart of God is shown to mankind in Jesus. Nature seems to be the outside, and Jesus the inside of God. His motives and emotions are learned not by a long process of generalizations from the facts of the world, but by a simple, open-eyed, open-hearted, child-like observation of the movements of the intellect and heart of Jesus. If the life of Jesus be the index by which men may know the workings of an

infinite nature, then we must believe that the dear God our Father never does a single thing to afflict his human children unnecessarily, never takes a delight in their sufferings—is always ready to save them from their sins, and does whatsoever an infinitely wise and benevolent nature can suggest to make them happy. So Jesus *was*. So God *must* be.

Now, it is a remarkable characteristic of Jesus that he never spoke an unnecessary word, nor performed an unnecessary deed. He never did for another what that person could do for himself. There seemed to be omnipotence at his command. He claimed that there was. He performed acts which go as far as acts can go to prove the possession of limitless power. All disease was under his control. He could instantaneously heal lepers, open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, and give tone and health to chronic paralytics. All nature seemed under his command. He could still storms, and multiply bread a thousandfold, even indefinitely, and change water into wine. He was the master of the grave. He sent his summons through its gates into eternity, and called back the spirits of the long departed to re-inhabit their former bodies. There is no perceptible limit to his power.

And yet he never performed a miracle to gratify his own passions or those of others. He never exerted his great power for display. If Jesus were a mere man to whom Almighty God had for a season delegated his almightiness, it is inconceivable that he should not at some time have put forth his hand to gratify the curiosity of his beloved friends, or to indulge his own desire for display, or bind the hands of his foes, or destroy them with his word of power. But he never did. I never knew a man, never heard of a man, find no record in any history of a man, so continent, so gloriously self-controlling, that he would not, at least once in his lifetime, break over the bonds and exert this delegated power selfishly. Jesus never did. Then God never does. It is the merest fanaticism to desire and pray that God will give us a sign, do a wonder, and set the universe agape at his monstrous power. He never did.

He never will. If his power seems glorious to us, it is because that power is glorious. All that men see is what Habakkuk calls "the hiding of his power." God does only what God cannot leave undone.

Again. Our Heavenly Father never does directly what he can do through others. He has begotten children in many respects like himself—like him in capability of knowing, feeling, and acting—like him in the perfect freedom of their wills. He endows them. He gives them field. He gives them time. They must do all the rest. He will never do for any man, in any respect, what that man can do for himself. He will never do for the race what the race can do for itself. He gives wood, and iron, and coal. But he never builds a vessel, hammers out a boiler, adjusts machinery, or raises a stone. He never constructs a locomotive, nor grades and lays a railway. He might have furnished Noah with a complete ocean steamer; but he did not; he let the patriarch hammer away at the ark through a century; but he *did* furnish him with the length, the breadth, and the height, because there was no skill in him to discover these, and they could not be known by the light of nature.

The Eternal Father could, in the very beginning, have stocked the world with all the implements of agriculture and trade, with all the facilities for the most rapid and comfortable travelling, and the instruments for scientific research, and have started his human family in house-keeping with everything complete at once. But he did not. He put man down among the great acts of God, the great facts of the universe, the great laws of his government, with all necessary physical, intellectual, and moral powers, and with due scope for their exercise, and man was to produce the result. God made the garden because *man could not*, and then set man to dress the garden because *God would not*. That has been his way ever, and will be his way for ever. It is mere fanaticism to do or desire anything different from this or contrary thereunto.

This same rule obtains in religious and spiritual man. We

are taught the lesson that man's agency precedes God's working, that in the spiritual regeneration of men there is first the agency of their fellow-men doing all they can do, and then the power of the mighty God doing what man cannot do. The dead Lazarus is a type of all our beloved ones who are still "dead in trespasses and sins." The voice of Jesus in his revivication represents the voice and power of God in regeneration. But in the salvation of men God declines to do what it is possible for men to accomplish. Hence we have human agencies, mere moral instrumentalities, operating for the conversion of men from the error of their ways, beginning in them that resurrection unto life which can be consummated only by the Spirit of God. Hence we have churches, sacraments, preaching, printed books. Hence we have the operation of the law of human influence, of husbands and wives, parents and children, teachers and scholars.

The Heavenly Father will not do for our children, dear brethren, what we earthly parents can do. He will not exert his omnipotence one particle toward building up our church in what we can do ourselves. He will not clean, and warm, and ventilate the building, and sing the hymns, and preach the sermons, and pay the pastoral visits, and instruct the Sunday-school. Because we *can* do these things, we *must*. He will not invite our friends to go with us to church, and exert over them the influence which we are bound to exert. But when we have gone to the end of our poor capabilities, the Heavenly Father will do all the rest. He will not roll the stone from the mouth of the cave in which our dear brother lies dead, but he will stand at the mouth of the sepulchre and cry with the voice of divine, almighty, revivifying power, "Lazarus, come forth."

It is in view of this permanent law of the universe that I come to beseech you, as Christian men, who love your brethren, dead though they be, to go with Jesus to their grave, and consider the stone at the mouth of their sepulchre; and while you believe that Jesus is the resurrection and the life, remember *that he expects you to do what you can; and while he does not*

say to you, "Bring your brethren to life again," he *does* say, "Take *ye* away the stone."

Let us consider some of the stones which it is possible for us to remove before Jesus does his mighty work.

There is the stone of *indifference*. Your friend has no care for religious subjects. He does not doubt. He is far from denying. He never dreams of opposing religion or religious people. He is not a fool. There is no stupidity in his nature. He is not a hard-hearted egotist. He has ordinarily quick perception and fine emotions. He cares for many things. He is careful of himself. He guards his health and cultivates his mind and manners. He is devoted to his business, and does not neglect his friends. His ear is open to the cry of sorrow, and he interests himself in the advancement of his race. But somehow it has come to pass that there has never come to him a proper sense of his own spiritual condition, a making real to himself the vast and grand eternal spiritual system with which he is environed, the closeness of the spiritual to the natural, his individual responsibility to God his Father for his influence over man his brother, the necessity of seeking after holiness and living a life of faith in the Son of God.

Many things may have produced this indifference. There is the engrossing work of life, the perpetual return of the bread question to be settled. He has, perhaps, always had to struggle for a livelihood, until the effort of working from day to day to keep life prolonged has grown into the habit of considering only such things as bear on that immediate question. Perhaps he is a line above that; but then the competitions of life are strong on him. He has heard so much of property, of merchandise and stocks, of boats and roads, of trade and gain-getting, that feeling that he has as much brains, perhaps, as those who have made vast fortunes, he has entered the race. The competition is so keen that he has forgotten everything else. He is like a racer who does not notice whether the sun is shining or the clouds gathering, and takes account of nothing but his approach to the goal. All he needs is to be arrested and made to feel for

a moment that he is wasting his energies for a prize he may not gain, or which, if gained, is not to be compared with something else he is neglecting. Perhaps it is the indifference of ignorance. The man does not know that there is gold in California or Australia, and keeps at his potato patch. He does not know the treasures and delights that are in a religious life, and so satisfies himself with the best things he does know, namely, his worldly pursuits and sinful pleasures. Perhaps he is in a cold clime. There are no hearty Christian people about him to generate a warm religious atmosphere. He is freezing. He becomes stupid. When people are at the point to freeze they grow duller and duller. They desire to cease from all active exertion. They would rather die than stir. It is no mercy in a fellow-traveller to indulge a freezing man and let him take a short nap. A short nap under the circumstances may be the long sleep of death. He must tug at him, pull him, pound him, jerk him, pinch him, make him angry, anything but let him be quiet. Quiet now is death. Your friend's indifference keeps the grave closed over him. You can at least try to take that stone away. Make him feel that nothing is so stupid, so wicked, so ruinous, as to ignore his Heavenly Father and the spiritual world. You must do this wisely, but you must do it. And I know no way so effectual as to make him see that, to whatever else you may be indifferent, you are sensible, quick to all that pertains to the great surrounding and underlying spiritual world.

Another stone covers another grave. It is *scepticism*. Men doubt. They hesitate. They question. But they do not yet positively deny. There are two courses open to them. They may bury their doubts in their own hearts, and throw themselves back into indifference; or they may open their minds to their friends. Their friends are either religious or irreligious. If the latter, they do not wish to hear anything on the subject; and if they did hear, they have no care for such things, no sympathy, no knowledge with which to help. If the former—you and I are of that class—what then? In religious circles the very name of “*sceptic*” has been

doomed to infamy. Just say "he's a sceptic," and all men shun him as a leper. More so, perhaps, years ago than now; but very much so now. A young man would sooner go to the pastor of his family and acknowledge himself a profane person, a drunkard, an unfaithful friend, than acknowledge he was a sceptic, scepticism being generally regarded in "evangelical circles" as worse than sin.

All that seems to me to be very wrong. We ought most tenderly to strive to ascertain whether this stone is over the mouth of the grave in which some dear child or some friend lies buried, and take the stone away. But if the friend should wake in the grave, and find the stone, and begin to bemoan his condition, would it not be most heartless in us to go away and leave him locked in there?

For my part I would rather have all the irreligious men in my congregation intelligently and honestly sceptical than brutally indifferent. It is stupidity that is dreadful. Doubt means some attention to the subject. Doubt means being awake to the importance of thinking. Doubt means that the mind has not settled in wrong. Honest doubt means earnest study. If our religion be true, and if the guidance of the Holy Spirit, as we teach, is guaranteed to every man who sets himself to the honest investigation of the truth, then what have we to be afraid of? Many a man has been driven into sheer infidelity, into indifference, and into despair, because he did not dare tell his nearest friends what was his condition. If there be any such a soul in my congregation, let me say at least this much, that he may favour me with a visit without fear that he will be despised or hated for any honest, uncaptious doubts. No, no, I have a fellow-feeling for such a soul. The son of a minister of the gospel myself, entering the ministry in early life, and early the father of boys, having received much of my religion traditionally, not daring to say my thoughts aloud, I know what it is to fight the spectres in the dark, so that now there seems to me very little of all the great ground of truth I stand on which is not, by God's grace, conquered territory—territory clung to all the more.

tenaciously and loved all the more dearly, because it has been conquered in silent battles that were not easily and cheaply won.

Oh, my brethren ! what our Master said to Thomas is true : “ Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” But doubting Thomas became a martyr for the faith ; and when the men who doubt have their doubts removed, not by sight but by faith, what blessed men are they ! Let your faith help their scepticism. Do not throw a poor man down because ye are so strong and he is so weak. Do not leave this stone on the mouth of your brother’s sepulchre. Make him feel that he is not necessarily lost because he questions, but that very many of all the Lord’s most faithful followers have had just such experience as his that Jesus sympathises with all such souls, and never wearies of them. Oh, if we had our dear Lord’s patience with the bruised reed and the smoking flax, how many such reeds would be mended which are now broken !—how many such wicks would flame into splendour, which we now smother into darkness by our want of skill or want of feeling†

Another stone lies at many a grave’s mouth : it is *unbelief in Christ because of unbelief in Christians*. It is exceedingly difficult to persuade men—we ourselves feel how difficult it is to believe—that a cause must always be kept distinct from its professed adherents and defenders. Alas ! for the world if men were called to believe in Christians rather than to believe in Christ. It ought to increase the scrupulousness of Christians in all their behaviour to know there are so few men of such philosophical cast or training of mind as to make this distinction. Ninety-nine out of every hundred men who are prejudiced against Christianity make a wrong use of the saying of Jesus, “ By their fruits ye shall know them.” The plain meaning of the Lord was, that if their lives are not being brought into accordance with Christianity, these people are not Christians ; that they are to be judged, not Christianity. I put it to your consciences whether you are acting fairly by your own intellects to acknowledge Christ’s authority in all respects. You hold

others to Christ's standard : who frees you ? But if you will quote the words of Jesus, are you not unfair to pervert them ? He says, "By their fruits ye shall know them," the false Christians ; but you use it as if he had said, "By their fruits ye shall know it," as if Christ had said, "Ye shall know the truth of Christianity by the evil doings of them who are no Christians except in name." I submit to your own candour the task of correcting this erroneous behaviour of your intellect which is so injurious to you.

But, my dear brethren, this wrong which unchristian people do to Christianity is no excuse for the wrong which our defective behaviour does them. They could not make this mistake if we did not furnish the occasion. Let us look closely about us, and see what is the spiritual condition of those nearest to us. The children of our neighbours are becoming humble, earnest young Christians. Ours are not. What is the reason ? Do not look, my brother, beyond yourself. Do not lay everything to the carnal minds and the pressure of the age, until you have thoroughly satisfied your own soul that you are not the stone at the mouth of the grave which holds them. You will have much difficulty in settling that question. Your children love you, and will not tell you. Perhaps their love has blinded them to the real state of the case. You are in their way to Jesus, and they love you so that they cannot see it. Search your own soul. If there be any evil way in us it will be sure to tell on our lives. We may be truly Christ's, and he will own us at his coming ; and yet there may be some ugly streak in our dispositions, some bad manners, some unchristian roughness that perpetually perplexes our children and servants, and keeps the force of the Gospel from their hearts.

If there be present, as so frequently in this congregation there are, gentlemen who have many in their employ, heads of large manufactories, chiefs of large mercantile houses who are communicants of some branch of Christ's church, let me beg them to consider their relations to those in their employ. My brother, *how many are there in your house ? Fifty, sixty, perhaps a*

hundred clerks and others. How many of them are professing Christians? You do not know? How can you remain ignorant? If you had the slightest suspicion that one of them was a rogue, you would set your ingenuity to work and expend days in satisfying yourself, and feel rewarded by the profound satisfaction you would have in the discovery of his incorruptibility, or in the sense of safety experienced at his detection and his expulsion from your house. But you do not know whether he is a Christian?

My brother, facts sometimes come to your pastor that do not reach you. You are known as a successful merchant and a member of the Church. Mothers, off in New England or in the far South, have heard your fame. They have boys who long to be merchants and push their fortunes in this great city. It nearly kills those mothers to give up those boys. But if they can only secure situations in your house, how happy those mothers would be! Well, you take them. They are not religious. Their mothers feel so safe and happy because their boys are under your religious influence. You set them to work. You push them. You make them work when they should be sleeping, or when they should be at that prayer-meeting. You stimulate them to undue methods of trade; you show no care for their souls, nor your own, nor any other souls. They see you spending your Sundays, sometimes your communion Sundays, at hotels, "drumming" up custom. What then? What then? Oh, my brother! you are not only allowing the stone to remain on the mouth of their graves, but you are heaping up stones and sealing the sepulchres. "Take away the stone!" Take it away this day. If all the members of my church would devote a portion of next week to tender religious care for their children and those in their employ, and the young people under their influence, the next communion Sunday would witness souls flocking into this church as the doves flock to their windows? It is related of Dr. Lyman Beecher that, while he was labouring *most successfully* in the City of Boston, he was asked how it was *that he was able to accomplish so much?* He replied, "*It is not*

I that do it; it is my Church. I," continued he, "preach as hard as I can on Sabbath, and then I have four hundred members who go out and preach every day of the week."

Perhaps the heaviest stone over the mouth of the grave of those who are dead in sins is *the indulgence of some vice*. That must be taken away to let the voice of the Gospel reach the torpid conscience. And no vice so stands in the way of the progress of the gospel as the vice of intemperance. "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God." While a man remains under the influence of strong drink the Gospel cannot reach him. So when a man is drinking, the first thing is to break him away from that. Therefore, it is more than once on Sunday night, after a day of work that had drained my vitality, I have walked and ridden until after midnight, going into unpleasant places, intent on rescuing some man whom I loved who was going down into that fearful abyss. I knew that until by loving effort I had broken that dire fascination over my brother, all my preaching to him would be as when one pipes in the face of the whirlwind. And I thank God for the measure of success vouchsafed these efforts.

Brethren, I beseech you to give your earnest efforts to the removal of this great obstruction to the gospel. Watch yourself, however safe you may be; watch your children and your clerks lovingly. Guard your homes. Take care that your dinner-tables on Sunday be not a gulf in which the sermons be drowned. Take care that your social pleasures have not the semblance of debauch. Take care that you do not somehow cause to stumble and fail those earnest young men who are striving to take the stone of intemperance from the grave of many a young Lazarus.

Finally, my brethren, let us go back to the grave of Lazarus. How Martha loved the dead, and how Mary loved him! Their friends among the Pharisees sympathised with these sweet bereaved sisters; but they could not minister to the grief-stricken heart. They could go to the grave and weep; but their tears could not fall in the sight of the beloved, their lamentations

could not stir the dull cold ear of death. They might move the stone away, and go in, and bring Lazarus out, and slip off the grave-clothes, and stand him upright in their presence. But there would be no comfort in that. He would still be sightless, and speechless, and deaf, and dead, and even offensive. They could not speak him into life. There is no help for those who go to the grave without Jesus. Have you a beloved wife, or husband, or child, or brother, dead in trespasses and sins, buried in darkness, the grave covered with a stone? Do you believe that Jesus is true when he says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life?" Take Jesus to the grave of your beloved. Jesus loves him. See how the Saviour weeps. Hear how the Redeemer groans. Do you not perceive how he loves him? Do all whatsoever Jesus bids you, as for your beloved. He will not make a mistake. He will not misdirect you. Do all he says. You can do no more. He does not require what is impracticable. He will do all the rest. But he will not remove the stone. Man's agency must precede God's power. "Take ye away the stone," he says. Now, brethren, let us take every stone away from every grave's mouth, and then we shall have our souls thrilled by hearing our Lord cry out, "Lazarus, come forth!" And then shall our eyes be gladdened by seeing the men who were dead in sins restored to spiritual life, and added to the circle of our active Christian brotherhood.

THE USE OF FEAR IN RELIGION.

BY REV. W. T. G. SHEDD, D.D.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."—PROVERBS ix. 10.

"And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."—LUKE xii. 4, 5.

IT is plain, from the texts of Scripture placed at the head of this discourse, that the feeling and principle of fear is a legitimate one. In these words of God himself, we are taught that it is the font and origin of true wisdom, and are commanded to be inspired by it. The Old Testament enjoins it, and the New Testament repeats and emphasizes the injunction; so that the total and united testimony of Revelation forbids a religion that is destitute of fear.

The New Dispensation is sometimes set in opposition to the Old, and Christ is represented as teaching a less rigid morality than that of Moses and the prophets. But the mildness of Christ is not seen, certainly, in the ethical and preceptive part of his religion. The Sermon on the Mount is a more searching code of morals than the Ten Commandments. It cuts into human depravity with a more keen and terrible edge than does the law proclaimed amidst thunderings and lightnings. Let us see if it does not. The Mosaic statute simply says to man, "Thou shalt not kill." But the re-enactment of this statute by incarnate Deity is accompanied with an explanation and an

emphasis that preclude all misapprehension and narrow construction of the original law, and render it a two-edged sword that pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. When the Hebrew legislator says to me, "Thou shalt not kill," it is possible for me, with my propensity, to look upon the outward appearance, and to regard the external act alone—to deem myself innocent if I have never actually murdered a fellow-being. But when the Lord of glory tells me that "whosoever is angry with his brother" is in danger of the judgment, my mouth is stopped, and it is impossible for me to cherish a conviction of personal innocency in respect to the sixth commandment. And the same is true of the seventh commandment, and the eighth commandment, and of all the statutes in the Decalogue. He who reads and ponders the whole Sermon on the Mount is painfully conscious that Christ has put a meaning into the Mosaic law that renders it a far more effective instrument of mental torture for the guilty, than it is as it stands in the Old Testament. The lightnings are concentrated. The bolts are hurled with a yet more sure and deadly aim. The new meaning is a perfectly legitimate and logical deduction, and in this sense there is no difference between the Decalogue and the Sermon—between the ethics of the Old and the ethics of the New Testament. But, so much more spiritual is the application, and so much more searching is the reach of the statute in the last of the two forms of its statement, that it looks almost like a new proclamation of law.

Our Lord did not intend, or pretend to teach, a milder ethics, or an easier virtue, on the Mount of Beatitudes, than that which he had taught fifteen centuries before on Mount Sinai. He indeed pronounces a blessing; and so did Moses, his servant, before him. But in each instance it is a blessing upon condition of obedience; which, in both instances, involves a curse upon disobedience. He who is meek shall be blest; but he who is not shall be condemned. He who is pure in heart, he who is pure in spirit, he who mourns over personal unworthiness, he who hungers and thirsts after a righteousness of which

he is destitute, he who is merciful, he who is a peace-maker, he who endures persecution patiently, and he who loves his enemies—he who is and does all this in a perfect manner, without a single slip or failure, is indeed blessed with the beatitude of God. But where is the man? What single individual in all the ages, and in all the generations since Adam, is entitled to the great blessing of these beatitudes, and not deserving of the dreadful curse which they involve? In applying such a high, ethereal test to human character, the Founder of Christianity is the severest and sternest preacher of law that has ever trod upon the planet. And he who stops with the merely ethical and preceptive part of Christianity, and rejects its forgiveness through atoning blood, and its regeneration by an indwelling Spirit—he who does not unite the fifth chapter of Matthew with the fifth chapter of Romans—converts the Lamb of God into the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He makes use of everything in the Christian system that condemns man to everlasting destruction, but throws away the very and the only part of it that takes off the burden and the curse.

It is not, then, a correct idea of Christ that we have, when we look upon him as unmixed complacency and unbalanced compassion. In all aspects, he was a complex personage. He was God, and he was man. As God, he could pronounce a blessing; and he could pronounce a curse, as none but God can or dare. As man, he was perfect; and into his perfection of feeling and of character there entered those elements that fill a good being with peace, and an evil one with woe. The Son of God exhibits goodness and severity mingled and blended in perfect and majestic harmony; and that man lacks sympathy with Jesus Christ who cannot, while feeling the purest and most unselfish indignation towards the sinner's sin, at the same time give up his own individual life, if need be, for the sinner's soul. The two feelings are not only compatible in the same person, but necessarily belong to a perfect being. Our Lord breathed out a prayer for his murderers so fervent, and so full of pathos, that it will continue to soften and melt the flinty

human heart to the end of time; and he also poured out a denunciation of woes upon the Pharisees (Matt. xxiii.), every syllable of which is dense enough with the wrath of God to sink the deserving objects of it "plump down, ten thousand fathoms deep, to bottomless perdition in adamantine chains and penal fire." The utterance, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do: Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" both fell from the same pure and gracious lips.

It is not surprising, therefore, that our Lord often appeals to the principle of fear. He makes use of it in all its various forms—from that servile terror which is produced by the truth when the soul is just waked up from its drowse in sin, to that filial fear which Solomon affirms to be the beginning of wisdom.

The subject thus brought before our minds by the inspired Word has a wide application to all ages and conditions of human life, and all varieties of human character. We desire to direct attention to *the use and value of religious fear in the opening periods of human life*. There are some special reasons why youth and early manhood should come under the influence of this powerful feeling. "I write unto you, young men," says St. John, "because ye are *strong*." We propose to urge upon the young the duty of cultivating the fear of God's displeasure because they are able to endure the emotion; because youth is the springtide and prime of human life, and capable of carrying burdens, and standing up under influences and impressions that might crush a feebler period or a more exhausted stage of the human soul.

1. In the first place, the emotion of fear ought to enter into the consciousness of the young, because *youth is naturally light-hearted*. "Childhood and youth," saith the preacher, "are vanity." The opening period in human life is the happiest part of it, if we have respect merely to the condition and circumstances in which the human being is placed. He is free from all public cares and responsibilities. He is encircled within the *strong arms* of parents and protectors. Even if he tries, he

cannot feel the pressure of those toils and anxieties which will come of themselves when he has passed the line that separates youth from manhood. When he hears his elders discourse of the weight and the weariness of this working-day world, it is with incredulity and surprise. The world is bright before his eye, and he wonders that it should ever wear any other aspect. He cannot understand how the freshness, and vividness, and pomp of human life should shift into its soberer and sterner forms; and he will not, until the

“Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy.”

Now there is something in this happy attitude of things to fill the heart of youth with gaiety and abandonment. His pulses beat strong and high. The currents of his soul flow like the mountain river. His mood is buoyant and jubilant, and he flings himself with zest and a sense of vitality into the joy and exhilaration all around him. But such a mood as this, unbalanced and untempered by a loftier one, is hazardous to the eternal interests of the soul. Perpetuate this gay festal abandonment of the mind; let the human being, through the whole of his earthly course, be filled with the sole single consciousness that *this* is the beautiful world, and will he, can he, live a stranger and a pilgrim in it? Perpetuate that vigorous pulse and that youthful blood which “runs tickling up and down the veins;” drive off and preclude all that care and responsibility which render human life so earnest; and will the young immortal go through it with that sacred fear and trembling with which he is commanded to work out his salvation?

Yet this buoyancy and light-heartedness are legitimate feelings. They spring up like wild flowers, from the very nature of man. God intends that prismatic hues and auroral lights shall flood our morning sky. He must be filled with a sour and rancid misanthropy who cannot bless the Creator that there is one part of man's sinful and cursed life which reminds of the

time and the state when there was no sin and no curse. There is, then, to be no extermination of this legitimate experience. But there is to be its moderation and its regulation.

And this we get by the introduction of the feeling and the principle of religious fear. The youth ought to seek an impression from things unseen and eternal. God, and his august attributes; Christ, and his awful Passion; heaven, with its sacred scenes and joys; hell, with its just woe and wail—all these should come in, to modify and temper the jubilation that without them becomes the riot of the soul. For this, we apprehend, is the meaning of our Lord when he says, "I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." It is not so much any particular species of fear that we are shut up to by these words, as it is the general habit and feeling. The fear of *hell* is, indeed, specified—and this proves that such a fear is rational and proper in its own place—but our Lord would not have us stop with this single and isolated form of the feeling. He recommends a solemn temper. He commands a being who stands continually upon the brink of eternity and immensity to be aware of his position. He would have the great shadow of eternity thrown in upon time. He desires that every man should realize, in those very moments when the sun shines the brightest and the earth looks the fairest, that there is another world than this, for which man is not naturally prepared, and for which he must make a preparation. And what he enjoins upon mankind at large, he specially enjoins upon youth. They need to be sobered more than others. The ordinary cares of this life, which do so much towards moderating our desires and aspirations, have not yet pressed upon the ardent and expectant soul, and therefore it needs, more than others, to fear and to "stand in awe."

2. Secondly, youth is *elastic, and readily recovers from undue depression*. The sceptical Lucretius tells us that the divinities are the creatures of man's fears, and would make us believe that all religion has its ground in fright. And do we not hear

this theory repeated by the modern unbeliever? What means this appeal to a universal and an unprincipled good-nature in the Supreme Being, and this rejection of everything in Christianity that awakens misgivings and forebodings within the sinful human soul? Why this opposition to the doctrine of an absolute, and therefore endless, punishment, unless it be that it awakens a deep and permanent dread in the heart of guilty man?

Now, we are not of that number who believe that thoughtless and lethargic man has been greatly damaged by his moral fears. It is the lack of a bold and distinct impression from the solemn objects of another world, and the utter absence of fear, that is ruining man from generation to generation. If we were at liberty, and had the power, to induce into the thousands and millions of our race who are running the rounds of sin and vice, some one particular emotion that should be medicinal and salutary to the soul, we would select that very one which our Lord had in view when he said, "I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him." If we were at liberty, and had the power, we would instantaneously stop these human souls that are crowding our avenues intent only upon pleasure and earth, and would fill them with the emotions of the day of doom; we would deluge them with the fear of God, that they might flee from their sins and the wrath to come.

But while we say this, we also concede that it is possible for the human soul to be injured by the undue exercise of this emotion. The bruised reed may be broken, and the smoking flax may be quenched, and hence it is the very function and office-work of the Blessed Comforter to prevent this. God's own children sometimes pass through a horror of great darkness, like that which enveloped Abraham; and the unregenerate mind is sometimes so overborne by its fears of death, judgment, and eternity, that the entire experience becomes for a time morbid and confused. Yet, even in this instance, the excess is better

than the lack. We had better travel this road to heaven than none at all. It is better to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire. When the saints from the heavenly heights look back upon their severe religious experience here on earth—upon their footprints stained with their own blood—they count it a small matter that they entered into eternal joy through much tribulation. And if we could but for one instant take their position, we should form their estimate; we should not shrink, if God so pleased, from passing through that martyrdom and crucifixion which has been undergone by so many of those gentle spirits—broken spirits, holy spirits—upon whom the burden of mystery once lay like night, and the far heavier burden of guilt lay like hell.

There is less danger, however, that the feeling and principle of fear should exert an excessive influence upon youth. There is an elasticity in the earlier periods of human life that prevents long-continued depression. How rare it is to see a young person smitten with insanity! It is not until the pressure of anxiety has been long continued, and the impulsive spring of the soul has been destroyed, that reason is dethroned. The morning of our life may, therefore, be subjected to a subduing and repressing influence, with very great safety. It is well to bear the yoke in youth. The awe produced by a vivid impression from the eternal world may enter into the exuberant and gladsome experience of the young with very little danger of actually extinguishing it, and rendering life permanently gloomy and unhappy.

3. Thirdly, youth is *exposed to sudden temptations and surprises into sin*. The general traits that have been mentioned as belonging to the early period in human life render it peculiarly liable to solicitations. The whole being of a healthful hilarious youth, who feels life in every limb, thrills to temptation like the lyre to the plectrum. Body and soul are alive to all the enticements of the world of sense; and in certain critical moments the entire sensorium, upon the approach of bold and powerful excitements, flutters and trembles like an

electrometer in a thunderstorm. All passionate poetry breathes of youth and spring. Most of the catastrophes of the novel and the drama turn upon the violent action of some temptation upon the highly excitable nature of youth. All literature testifies to the hazards that attend the morning of our existence; and daily experience and observation certainly corroborate the testimony. It becomes necessary, therefore, to guard the human soul against these liabilities which attend it in its forming period. And, next to a deep and all-absorbing *love* of God, there is nothing so well adapted to protect against sudden surprisals as a profound and definite fear of God.

It is a great mistake to suppose that apostate and corrupt beings like ourselves can pass through all the temptations of this life unscathed, while looking *solely* at the pleasant aspects of the Divine Being, and the winning forms of religious truth. We are not yet seraphs, and we cannot always trust to our affectionateness to carry us through a violent attack of temptation. There are moments in the experience of the Christian himself when he is compelled to call in the *fear* of God to his aid, and to steady his infirm and wavering virtue by the recollection that "the wages of sin is death." "By the fear of the Lord, men"—and Christian men, too—"depart from evil." It will not always be so. When that which is perfect is come, perfect love shall cast out fear; but, until the disciple of Christ reaches heaven, his religious experience must be a somewhat complex one. A reasonable and well-defined apprehensiveness must mix with his affectionateness, and deter him from transgression in those severe passages in his history when love is languid and fails to draw him. Says an old English divine, "The fear of God's judgments, or of the threatenings of God, is of much efficiency when some present temptation presseth upon us. When conscience and the affections are divided, when conscience doth withdraw a man from sin, and when his carnal affections draw him forth to it, then should the fear of God come in. It is a holy design for a Christian to counterbalance the pleasures of sin with the terrors of it, and thus to

cure the poison of the viper by the flesh of the viper. Thus that admirable saint and martyr, Bishop Hooper, when he came to die, one endeavoured to dehort him from death by this,—‘O, sir! consider that life is sweet, and death is bitter.’ Presently he replied, ‘Life to come is more sweet, and death to come is more bitter,’ and so went to the stake and patiently endured the fire. Thus, as a Christian may sometimes outweigh the pleasures of sin by the consideration of the reward of God, so sometimes he may quench the pleasures of sin by the consideration of the terrors of God.”

But much more is all this true in the instance of the hot-blooded youth. How shall he resist temptation, unless he has some *fear* of God before his eyes? There are moments in the experience of the young when all power of resistance seems to be taken away by the very witchery and blandishment of the object. He has no heart, and no nerve, to resist the beautiful siren. And it is precisely in these emergencies in his experience—in these moments when this world comes up before him clothed in pomp and gold, and the other world is so entirely lost sight of, that it throws in upon him none of its solemn shadows and warnings—it is precisely now, when he is just upon the point of yielding to the mighty yet fascinating pressure, that he needs to feel an impression, bold and startling, from the *wrath* of God. Nothing but the most active remedies will have any effect in this tumult and uproar of the soul. When the whole system is at fever-heat, and the voice of reason and conscience is drowned in the clamors of sense and earth, nothing can startle and stop but the trumpet of Sinai.

It is in these severe experiences, which are more common to youth than they are to manhood, that we see the great value of the feeling and principle of fear. It is comparatively in vain for a youth under the influence of strong temptations—and particularly when the surprise is sprung upon him—to ply himself with arguments drawn from the beauty of virtue, and the excellence of piety. They are too ethereal for him in his present mood. Such arguments are for a calmer moment and a more

dispassionate hour. His blood is now boiling, and those higher motives which would influence the saint, and would have some influence with him if he were not in this critical condition, have little power to deter him from sin. Let him, therefore, pass by the love of God, and betake himself to the *anger* of God for safety. Let him say to himself, in this moment when the forces of Satan, in alliance with the propensities of his own nature, are making an onset—when all other considerations are being swept away in the rush and whirlwind of his passions—let him coolly bethink himself and say, “If I do this abominable thing which the soul of God hates, then God, the Holy and Immaculate, will burn my spotted soul in his pure eternal flame.” For there is great power in what the Scriptures term “the terror of the Lord,” to destroy the edge of temptation. “A wise man feareth and departeth from evil.” Fear kills out the delight in sin. Damocles cannot eat the banquet with any pleasure, so long as the naked sword hangs by a single hair over his head. No one can find much enjoyment in transgression if his conscience is feeling the action of God’s holiness within it. And well would it be if, in every instance in which a youth is tempted to fling himself into the current of sin that is flowing all around him, his moral sense might at that moment be filled with some of that terror and some of that horror which breaks upon the damned in eternity. Well would it be if the youth in the moment of violent temptation could lay upon the emotion or the lust that entices him a distinct and red coal of hell-fire. No injury would result from the most terrible fear of God, provided it could always fall upon the human soul in those moments of strong temptation, and of surprisals, when all other motives fail to influence, and the human will is carried headlong by the human passions. There may be a fear and a terror that does harm, but man need be under no concern lest he experiences too much of this feeling in his hours of weakness and irresolution in his youthful days of temptation and of dalliance. Let him rather bless God that there is such an intense light and such a *pure fire* in the Divine Essence, and seek to have his

whole vitiated and poisoned nature penetrated and purified by it. Have you never looked with a steady gaze into a grate of burning anthracite, and noticed the quiet intense glow of the heat, and how silently the fire throbs and pulsates through the fuel, burning up everything that is inflammable, and making the whole mass as pure, and clean, and clear as the element of fire itself? Such is the effect of a contact of God's wrath with man's sin; of the penetration of man's corruption by the wrath of the Lord.

4. In the fourth place, the feeling and principle of fear ought to enter into the experience of both youth and manhood, *because it relieves from all other fear*. He who stands in awe of God can look down from a very great height upon all other perturbation. When we have seen him from whose sight the heavens and the earth flee away, there is nothing, in either the heavens or the earth, that can produce a single ripple upon the surface of our souls. This is true even of the unregenerate mind. The fear in this instance is a servile one—it is not filial and affectionate—and yet it serves to protect the subject of it from all other feelings of this species, because it is greater than the others, and, like Aaron's serpent, swallows up the rest. If we must be liable to fears—and the transgressor always must be—it is best that they should all be concentrated in one single overmastering sentiment. Unity is ever desirable, and even if the human soul were to be visited by none but the servile forms of fear, it would be better that this should be the "terror of the Lord." If, by having the fear of God before our eyes, we could thereby be delivered from the fear of man, and all those apprehensions which are connected with time and sense, would it not be wisdom to choose it? We should then know there was but one quarter from which our peace could be assailed. This would lead us to look in that direction; and, here upon earth, sinful man cannot look at God long without coming to terms and becoming reconciled with him.

5. The fifth and last reason which we assign for cherishing *the feeling and principle of fear* applies to youth, to manhood,

and to old age, alike: *the fear of God conducts to the love of God*. Our Lord does not command us to fear "him who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell" because such a feeling as this is intrinsically desirable, and is an ultimate end in itself; it is in itself undesirable, and it is only a means to an end. By it our torpid souls are to be awakened from their torpor; our numbness and hardness of mind in respect to spiritual objects is to be removed. We are never for a moment to suppose that the fear of perdition is set before us as a model and permanent form of experience to be toiled after—a positive virtue and grace intended to be perpetuated through the whole future history of the soul. It is employed only as an antecedent to a higher and a happier emotion; and when the purpose for which it has been elicited has been answered, it then disappears. "Perfect love casteth out fear; for fear hath torment" (1 John iv. 18).

But, at the same time, we desire to direct attention to the fact that he who has been exercised with this emotion, thoroughly and deeply, is conducted by it into the higher and happier form of religious experience. Religious fear and anxiety are the prelude to religious peace and joy. These are the discords that prepare for the concords. He who, in the Psalmist's phrase, has known the power of the Divine anger, is visited with the manifestation of Divine love. The method in the thirty-second Psalm is the method of salvation. Day and night God's hand is heavy upon the soul; the fear and sense of the Divine displeasure is passing through the conscience like electric currents. The moisture, the sweet dew of health and happiness, is turned into the drought of summer by this preparatory process. Then the soul acknowledges its sin, and its iniquity it hides no longer. It confesses its transgressions unto the Lord—it justifies and approves of this wrath which it has felt—and he forgives the iniquity of its sin.

It is not a vain thing, therefore, to fear the Lord. The emotion of which we have been discoursing, painful though it be, is remunerative. There is something in the very experience

of moral pain which brings us nigh to God. When, for instance, in the hour of temptation, I discern God's calm and holy eye bent upon me, and I wither beneath it, and resist the enticement because I fear to disobey, I am brought by this chapter in my experience into very close contact with my Maker. There has been a vivid and personal transaction between us. I have heard him say, "If thou doest that wicked thing thou shalt surely die; refrain from doing it, and I will love thee and bless thee." This is the secret of the great and swift reaction which often takes place in the sinner's soul. He moodily and obstinately fights against the Divine displeasure. In this state of things there is nothing but fear and torment. Suddenly he gives way, acknowledges that it is a good and a just anger, no longer seeks to beat it back from his guilty soul, but lets the billows roll over while he casts himself upon the Divine pity. In this act and instant—which involves the destiny of the soul, and has millenniums in it—when he recognizes the justice and trusts in the mercy of God, there is a great rebound, and through his tears he sees the depth, the amazing depth, of the Divine compassion. For, paradoxical as it appears, God's love is best seen in the light of God's displeasure. When the soul is penetrated by this latter feeling, and is thoroughly sensible of its own worthlessness—when man knows himself to be vile, and filthy, and fit only to be burned up by the Divine immaculateness—then, to have the Great God take him to his heart, and pour out upon him the infinite wealth of his mercy and compassion, is overwhelming. Here the Divine indignation becomes a foil to set off the Divine love. Read the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel with an eye "purged with euphrasy and rue," so that you can take in the full spiritual significance of the comparisons and metaphors, and your whole soul will dissolve in tears as you perceive how the great and pure God, in every instance in which he saves an apostate spirit, is compelled to bow his heavens and come down into a loathsome sty of sensuality. Would it be love of the highest order in a seraph, to leave the pure cerulean, and trail

his white garments through the haunts of vice to save the wretched inmates from themselves and their sins? O, then, what must be the degree of affection and compassion when the infinite Deity, whose essence is light itself, and whose nature is the intensest contrary of all sin, tabernacles in the flesh upon the errand of redemption! And if the pure spirit of that seraph, while filled with an ineffable loathing, and the hottest moral indignation at what he saw in character and conduct, were also yearning with an unspeakable desire after the deliverance of the vicious from their vice—the moral wrath thus setting in still stronger relief the moral compassion that holds it in check—what must be the relation between these two emotions of the Divine Being! Is not the one the measure of the other? And does not the soul that fears God in a *submissive* manner, and acknowledges the righteousness of the Divine displeasure with entire acquiescence and no sullen resistance, prepare the way, in this very act, for an equally intense manifestation of the Divine mercy and forgiveness?

The subject treated of in this discourse is one of the most important and frequent that is present in the Scriptures. He who examines is startled to find that the phrase, “fear of the Lord,” is woven into the whole web of Revelation from Genesis to the Apocalypse. The feeling and principle under discussion has a Biblical authority, and significance that cannot be pondered too long or too closely. It therefore has an interest for every human being, whatever may be his condition or his circumstances. All great religious awakenings begin in the dawning of the august and terrible aspects of the Deity upon the popular mind, and they reach their height and happy consummation in that love and faith for which the antecedent fear has been the preparation. Well and blessed would it be for this irreverent and unfearing age, in which the advance in mechanical arts and vice is greater than that in letters and virtue, if the popular mind could be made reflective and solemn in this great emotion.

We would, therefore, pass by all other feelings, and endea-

your to fix the eye upon the distinct and unambiguous fear of God, and would urge the young, especially, to seek for it as for hid treasures. The feeling is a painful one, because it is a *preparatory* one. There are other forms of religious emotion which are more attractive, and are necessarily in their place; these you may be inclined to cultivate at the expense of the one enjoined by our Lord in the text. But we solemnly and earnestly entreat you not to suffer your inclination to divert your attention from your duty and your true interest. We tell you, with confidence, that next to the affectionate and filial love of God in your heart, there is no feeling or principle in the whole series that will be of such real solid service to you as that one enjoined by our Lord upon "his disciples first of all." You will need its awing and repressing influence in many a trying scene, in many a severe temptation. Be encouraged to cherish it from the fact that it is a very effective, a very powerful emotion. He who has the fear of God before his eyes is actually and often kept from falling. It will prevail with your weak will and your infirm purpose, when your motives fail. And if you could but stand where those do who have passed through that fearful and dangerous passage through which you are now making a transit; if you could but know, as they do, of what untold value is everything that deters from the wrong and nerves to the right, in the critical moments of human life; you would know, as they do, the utmost importance of cherishing a solemn and serious dread of displeasing God. The more simple and unmixed this feeling is in your own experience, the more influential will it be. Fix it deeply in the mind that the great God is holy. Recur to this fact continually. If the dread which it awakens casts a shadow over the gaiety of youth, remember that you need this, and will not be injured by it. The doctrine commends itself to you because you are young, and because you are strong. If it fills you with misgivings at times, and threatens to destroy your peace of mind, let the emotion operate. Never stifle it, as you value your salvation. You had better be unhappy for a

season than yield to temptation and grievous snares which will drown you in perdition. Even if it hangs dark and low over the horizon of your life, and for a time invests this world with sadness, be resolute with yourself, and do not attempt to remove the feeling, except in the legitimate way of the gospel. Remember that every human soul out of Christ ought to fear, "for he that believeth not on the Son, the wrath of God abideth on him." And remember, also, that every one who believes in Christ ought not to fear, for "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, and he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."

And with this thought would we close. This fear of God may and should end in the perfect love that casteth out fear. This powerful and terrible emotion which we have been considering may and ought to prepare the soul to welcome the sweet and thrilling accents of Christ, saying, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden," with your fears of death, judgment, and eternity, "and I will give you rest." Faith in Christ lifts the soul above all fears, and eventually raises it to that serene world, that blessed state of being, where there is no more curse and no more foreboding.

"Serene will be our days, and bright
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security."

MEAT FOR MEN.

BY REV. CHARLES F. DEEMS, D.D.

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."—HEBREWS v. 12—14-

PAUL was specially strong in his advocacy of knowledge, and his detestation of wilful ignorance. If any man ever taught that "ignorance is the mother of devotion," it was not Paul. If any man ever endeavoured to retain a priestly hold upon a people by cultivating himself as much as possible, and keeping them in ignorance, it was not Paul. In writing to the Philippians (i. 9), he says: "This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more *in knowledge and in all judgement.*" He speaks of the Colossians (iii. 10) as having "put on the new man, which is renewed *in knowledge* after the image of him that created him." He rejoices in the Romans (xv. 14), being persuaded of them that they "are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge." He speaks of the Corinthians (2 Cor. viii. 7) as "abounding in faith, and utterance, and knowledge." Other passages might be quoted from his writings, but these show how Paul connected knowledge with regeneration, with gracefulness of heart and demeanour, and with usefulness of life.

Nor was Peter less a believer in knowledge. The very first acquirement, after faith, is courage, and the next, after courage,

is knowledge. "Add to your virtue (courage) *knowledge*," is the exhortation of this apostle (2 Peter i. 5), and then he exhorts us (iii. 8) to "grow in grace and in the *knowledge* of our Lord and Saviour," intimating that no one shall grow in grace who does not grow in knowledge.

No man who believes that he has a truth in hand feels any encouragement to present it to one whose mind is empty of knowledge. The more knowledge one has in any department, the more ready is he to comprehend and appreciate discoveries in that department. The enthusiastic inventor has his zeal dampened when he finds that he is attempting to explain his wonderful invention to a man who is totally ignorant of the first principles of mechanics. To him who knows nothing of mathematics, or speculative astronomy, or chemistry, what splendour is there in the discoveries of Leverrier or Faraday? It is just so that want of knowledge in the hearer dampens the zeal of the preacher. Paul was on the full stretch of an argument on the priesthood of Christ when he was suddenly arrested, in mid-career, by the recollection of the want of knowledge in those to whom he was writing. He stops to complain that they "are dull of hearing," that when they should be feeding on meat they are drinking milk, that when they should be teachers they need to be taught first principles, and when they should be men they are babes.

We modern and feeble followers of the apostles feel the same drawback. I have before admitted to you, my brethren, that I believe there is much very inapt, crude, and stupid preaching; but I have at the same time insisted that there is vastly more stupid hearing, and the failure of great effects in preaching is not so much due to the pulpit as to the pew. The man who preaches must know something: he must study, he must make some preparation. No man but a fanatic ever attempts to talk about that of which he is conscious of knowing nothing. But do you not undertake to listen to discourses in departments of thought to which you have given no attention? And do you not suppose that that is exceedingly discouraging to your pastor? If you endeavour to render your minds receptive as he tries to

render his impative, would there not be better success in preaching? Did you ever try to kindle fires? Do you recollect that it was not so easy to make green wood burn as it was to kindle dry wood? An ignorant hearer in a church is like a wet log laid on the fire, that sobs and simmers and frets through a long process before it becomes dry enough to kindle. There is a contest between the log and the fire—whether the fire shall kindle the log, or the log shall extinguish the fire. Just so it is when an earnest minister has to deal with an ignorant congregation. And, indeed, it may not be a congregation ignorant of science and art and literature and politics and business. It may be greatly learned in all these departments, and yet ignorant of spiritual things. It is all the more painful when this ignorance of the highest things is found with learning in lower departments.

I have come to-day to urge you, the people of my congregation, to lift yourselves out of this lowness to a higher plane; to take time from less important things, and devote it to what is indispensable; to learn to feel that it is quite as necessary for you to prepare to hear, as it is for me to prepare to preach. We shall then come together, spark and tinder, fire and dry wood; and then the flames on our altar shall gladden us as they go grandly up toward heaven.

There must be some fountain of spiritual knowledge. The oracles of God are the only source of that knowledge. Our knowledge of matter is gained from the study of the properties of matter; our knowledge of the laws of mind is gained by the study of the human intellect; our knowledge of spiritual things by a study of God's Spirit. For physical science the material universe is the field; for mental science the intellectual constitution of man; for spiritual science the mind of the Spirit in the word of God. And all these several departments are perfectly harmonious. There could not possibly be a discovery in what is called physical science which conflicts with any properly ascertained law of human mental operations, nor any of these laws *which conflict with the Infinite Mind.* Our conception of God

necessitates our belief in the oneness of all creation and the perfect harmony of all its parts. All true religious knowledge is in perfect consistency with pure reason; not, perhaps, your reasoning, nor mine, but with the Last Reason, God's sublime power of keeping hold of all thoughts and keeping all thoughts held in their relationships.

Now, just as there is a progressive system in any other department of knowledge, in nature and in mind, by which we can ascend from simplest facts to their complex connections, and from these connections to generalizations, which we call laws, so there is a progressive system of truth in the Bible. Religious knowledge must be progressive. We ought to know more than our fathers, the moderns more than the ancients.

And this does not necessitate the making of a new revelation. A book written on geology a quarter of a century ago is absolutely worthless now, except as a milestone, far behind, to show the progress of later investigations. So of chemistry, botany, astronomy. Yet these do not necessitate the idea of fresh creations. The atoms, the affinities, the plants, the rocks, the stones are the same that they have been for thousands of years; but our acquirements in the knowledge of all these are perpetually enlarging. The records of God's mind in the Bible need no appendix or addition, yet the workers in this field will expand the area of religious knowledge as long as the Bible and the human mind co-exist in the universe, just as astronomy will extend its domain so long as the mind of man co-exists with God's multitudinous stars.

In the sixth chapter of this epistle, Paul presents three couplets of elements of all religion, Jewish and Christian; namely, repentance and faith, baptism and laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. These are easily comprehended. But there is a greater, deeper, more important, and more influential doctrine than these all, namely, the priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, which underlies all those others, and gives them animation; without which, indeed, all those *others are inert and worthless*. There are mysteries

in the physical world which probably will never be unveiled by the mightiest effort of the human intellect, such as the simplest form of the lowest animal life. There is a mystery in the human intellect, such as its apparent locality in one individual's conscious existence, combined with its apparent excursive capability of being in an instant present at a distant fixed star. And there is an inscrutable mystery in the connection between mind and matter. So there is a mystery in the existence of operation of spirit. It is a sublime, a "great mystery of godliness." But our chief intellectual joys, and our main intellectual successes, come from our efforts to unveil the mystery, however unsuccessful these efforts are.

So of the deepest things in the spiritual department. The prophets, men of mightiest penetration, men whose minds God had made like red-hot augurs, burning as they pierced, have searched these things diligently. The angels, the brightest intelligences, standing in the highest illumination of eternity, have desired to look into them. The best and noblest employment of any man's power is the search after the truth as it is in Jesus.

A profound knowledge of divine truth of course includes being grounded in the first principles, and never abandoning them. When Paul speaks of "leaving the first principles of Christ," he certainly cannot mean the abandoning of them, any more than a student in the highest departments of pure or applied mathematics abandons his multiplication table, although in one sense he has left it far behind; or any more than a vine abandons the earth, although it has left it, and gone climbing up to the topmost branch of the tree.

Repentance and faith, the changing one's mind and affections, and placing them on Jesus; baptisms, which may mean the many washings of the Jews, or the various forms in which Christians signify their belief in the death and resurrection of Jesus; and laying on of hands, which may signify the placing of the hand of the sinner on the head of the sacrifice, or any *ceremonial* by which one is acknowledged by his brethren to be

in complete fellowship with the followers of Jesus; the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment—that is to say, the continuance of existence after death, and the perpetuity of individual moral responsibility; these are the mere elements, the alphabet of the science of religion. If a man rest on them, he is to be a neophyte and a babe for ever.

There is a deeper knowledge, some explication of which Paul gives in this epistle; it is a knowledge of the relation of each elementary truth to the solitary and perpetual priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Every truth in the whole range of knowledge, man's or God's, has its own intrinsic value; but every truth has also another value, which comes to it from its connection with the entire universal system of truths. That there is such a connection, all our discoveries go to prove. A lower system may revolve with other systems around a common centre. Each of these lower systems is characterised by its centre, and the entire mass by the common centre. In studying any science, we must know what is the central truth. The whole scheme of the science, with all its subordinate truths and principles, depends upon that. One great trouble with Christian students is, that they devote themselves to some one truth, which is certainly truth, but which they study segregated from its connections, and especially not regarded as depending upon a central truth.

There is just as much a science of supernature as there is a science of nature; but it is as absurd to complain that the Bible was not written scientifically, in an orderly body of dogmatic theology, as to complain that the book of nature was not written scientifically—that is, all the plants arranged in growth, in parterres and strips, like ribbons, and the animals set along, as they are arranged in the great cabinets of natural history. No, let God be praised for ever, that he did not make this world after the stiff pattern of a Dutch garden, but flung the beauties all about, giving man's mind the capability of educing the scientific system from this apparently promiscuous prodigality of God's creation. Just so he made the Bible, history, and pro-

phesy, and song, and drama, and letter. There is a string of truth on which they are strung, a principle moving through them all. It is our business to discover that principle, and not to content ourselves with being amused at the phenomena of individual truths, and not destroy our intellectual symmetry and equipoise by incessant devotion to a truth separated from all its connections.

The importance of cultivating a profound knowledge of the highest and deepest truths may be brought home to us by the following considerations:—

1. It is a sin to neglect any part of God's oracles. If the Bible be the word of God—if it contain "the mind of the Spirit"—then to neglect any portion manifests a disrespect for the authority of God, which must seriously weaken any man's moral constitution. In the instructions which a subject receives from his king, the royal authority is as much in every part as it is in any part. To select portions for study and obedience is to be disobedient, as it is the setting up of our individual private judgment against the wisdom and the will of the infinite Heavenly Father. It furthermore argues a want of love for truth. This love for truth it is indispensable to cultivate. It is really more important than a nervous carefulness to be exact in all our statements, and accurate in the use of our words.

There is a class of precise people who are most deliberate and careful in their speeches, but have not the slightest love for the truth, and are governed simply by a fear of their personal safety, having been raised upon such moral food as "honesty is the best policy." No man must be able to detect the slightest divergence of their statements from the "facts in the case," but when they have "said their say," they have no care whatever as to whether the falsehood or the truth prevail. Theirs is a dead truthfulness, an exact corpse, whose animating soul of truth has fled. How often we have seen such people in our courts of law, and even, unfortunately, in our church councils! A liberalness that is not animated by a vivid love for the truth is worse than worthless; it is a deceiving counterfeit of the

truth. Devotion to the whole system of truth in the Bible develops one's love for all truth, so as to ennoble, and purify, and enrich the entire character.

2. Profound spiritual knowledge is necessary in order to teach others. Every man is a teacher, whether he will be or not ; but every man ought to feel the importance and privilege of being able to give his fellow-man some help, however small, out of the darkness into the light. It is not only the duty of preachers, and professors, and editors, and authors to teach, but parents owe it to their children, and every man and woman in the conversation of society to every other man or woman. It is a wretched superficiality which makes our social intercourse so stale, and flat, and unprofitable. This is the reason why our humanity climbs the hill of progress at so slow a pace, there is such a weight to carry, so many thousands contribute nothing to the advancement, spending their lives in mere twaddle and intellectual inanities. If each man would devote only a small portion of his time to the acquisition of a profounder knowledge of the divinest things, it would so operate on all his modes of thought and speech, that all science, art, literature, politics, trade, and manners would be set in more beautiful lights, and become fresher and sweeter. It would not make life rigid. Nothing makes a man so stiff as ignorance. It would touch the loveliest valleys of thought and sentiments with fingers of light stretched down from the central sun. If not able to teach the truth, we should thus be very able to teach the love of the truth. We should at least not be damaging our fellow-men with those half-truths which are falsehoods.

3. It is necessary to keep us in times when false doctrines are influential. The examination of doctrines will go on so long as there remains any vigour in the human intellect. Men will look at the attractive. We must employ our active faculties somehow. Nothing is too sacred for the human reason to touch. The great trouble with us is that men are impatient in their studies, and not willing to work long enough to become profound. They throw their crude conjectures out as if they were the well-ascertained decisions of their judgment, and the well-digested conclu-

sions of their reason. And others, still more impatient or incapable, accept them and teach them, and this teaching confirms the teachers in their error, and thus the fluid error crystallizes.

There is no system altogether erroneous. There is no heresy which has not some truth in it. It could not otherwise endure a day. After all that is said of our poor human nature, men do not love error because it is error, but because they mistake it for truth. It is thus that false doctrines prevail—they *seem* so true. In the times of the prevalence of such false doctrines there are two things important: one is to save ourselves, and the other is to save our fellow-men. No strength of our own will save us. When the storm bursts, all loose vessels are driven about, however large and strong they may be. We must be anchored. We must have connections “within the veil.” When the high winds blow over the land, the feathers and chips and all light things are lifted and tossed, and the weather-vanes on steeples are swung round and round; but the mountains stand. The storm may be so fierce as to start great boulders down the mountain-side, and wrench the trees from their strong roots; but the everlasting mountains stand. So, Christian men should not be carried about by every wind of doctrine, as feathers; but should stand and turn the winds as the mountains do. We must be ready to give a *reason* for the hope that is in us.

It does not require great acquisitions of worldly learning to become profoundly versed in spiritual things. A simple, obedient, trusting heart, going unaffectedly to the Eternal Spirit of truth, will be led to such knowledge of the key-truth as will enable him to unlock all the caskets as he comes to them. This explains what may have at some time puzzled you, the fact that learned professors and clergymen are often carried away with foolish theories and heresies, while the unlettered child of God keeps to the faith once delivered to the saints. It is because this latter clings to the truth as it is in Jesus, the innermost central truth of the universe. To such a man, others, who have not been able as yet to reach that foundation, may hold and be saved. I think you will be delighted in the day of the revela-

tion, when you discover how many men of genius and learning have been saved by holding to the simple faith of their plain wives and artless children, until they reached the great central truth. Human learning does not necessarily keep us from the most profound knowledge of divine things. It should rather lead us thereto. It is our fault if it do not. And if it do not, then, instead of anchoring us and thus saving us, it overloads us and sinks us, and thus destroys us.

4. The profounder one's knowledge of the greatest divine truths, the greater one's humility. Humility is not a mean virtue. It does not lead a man to undervalue himself; but it does help him from the folly of overvaluing himself, and thus getting to himself the whole universe out of proportion. The humblest of all the students in any college is generally found to be the most wise and learned teacher. A broad awe comes over any one who often stands face to face with the loftiest and widest and most fixed of all the solemnities. He cannot be puffed up. He may be gentle and playful and tender, but he cannot be proud. If all a man knows of the Bible is the original tongues in which it was written, its history, its chronology, its literature, he may be a self-conceited sciolist; but when he comes to know him for whom were all things and by whom are all things, he falls naturally into his place, and the things that are seen and temporal will yield in his estimation to the things which are unseen and eternal, and he becomes simple in his love for the truth, especially of the commanding truth of the universe.

5. This profound knowledge of divine truth increases the lovingness of a man's nature. Knowledge and love are twins. It was a pagan idea that love should be a blind god. No eyes quicker than the eyes of love to see all that is good and sweet in the beloved. The Christian idea is expressed by Paul (Phil. i. 9) in his saying to the Philippians: "And this I pray, that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and in all judgement." It is only the false and meretricious which perishes as we know it better. Familiarity breeds contempt.

only among the contemptible. The adage is that a man is never a hero to his own valet. This is true of such men as are in reality no heroes at all.

A man, like anything else, has an intrinsic value. The more *that* is known, the more the man must be appreciated. He has also a relative value. The more that is known the more the man is valued. The profounder our knowledge of divine things, the more we care to know the intrinsic and relative value of God and man and men, and the more precious the whole universe, with all its parts, becomes to us. It is disease which makes a man's head grow out of proportion to his heart. A man may have spiritual hydrocephalus, in which the head is filled and swollen with water, and not with brains. The more we know the beautiful, the sublime, and the good, the better, the sublimer, the more beautiful they become to us.

6. Sectarianism owes its existence to a want of knowledge of the highest central truths. A sect comes of a disproportionate attention to some section of the great circle of truth. Some doctrine, some sacrament, some principle, true in itself, but only part of the truth, certainly not the great governing truth, is taken as the paramount centre of the whole Christian system. The more a man knows of the truth, the more churches he belongs to; and when a man comes to a clear perception and a profound appreciation of the whole truth as it is in Jesus, he finds no difficulty in belonging to all the churches. The true "catholic church" is that which embraces all who have any truth. We have the pleasure in this day of seeing the sects coming together. There is a better feeling. The courtesies multiply. Forbearance increases. Now all this may come of one or two things: indifference to all truth, or increasing love for the chief truths. If it be the former, it will rest in the mere conventionality of society, and Christians will more and more treat one another like gentlemen; but if it be the latter, it will strike down into the very roots of our nature, and Christians will treat one another more and more like brethren. It must needs be that there be many churches, but they need not be

sects ; none need feel that the others are wrong because they are right, nor that the others are not churches because they themselves are. They need not clash. Each orb of our solar system sails majestically on its vast voyage, held by the power of the central sun. It does not keep its place by any strength of will in itself. It is not the whole system. Yet it has its individuality. As it is not necessary that all the planets with their satellites should be rolled into one globe to secure the unity of the system, so it is not necessary that all the churches should be rolled into one "denomination" to secure the unity of the body of Christ. Deep knowledge of the highest spiritual things is to all Christians a law of gravitation, keeping them in their orbit.

7. The oracles of God are the instruments of our personal sanctification. We hear much of sanctification in some circles, and much that is worse than nonsense. All Christians believe that we must become holy in our very inmost natures. How is a man to be thus sanctified? What means must he employ to accomplish this unspeakably desirable thing? I will not answer in my own words, nor even in the words of religious teachers, who are held, and justly held, in affectionate respect for the sanctity of their own lives. But surely Peter knew, and he says: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit." Surely St. Paul knew, and he says: "Now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness." Surely our blessed Saviour knew, and he says, in praying to his Father for his disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

It is quite apparent that none of these greatest leaders of religion taught anything like some of our modern ideas of sanctification. The Spirit of God in the Word of God does all this work on willing souls. It is not done in a moment. The beginning is instantaneous, and the end, but the intermediate work may occupy a life. We are, through the Spirit, to learn the truth; and this truth will show us what is righteousness, the right; and we are to purify our spirits, not by some supposed act of consecration in a moment of enthusiasm, however honest

and good that enthusiasm may be, but by constant obedience to the truth, by the aid of the Spirit of God. Even Jesus knew no other way to sanctification. It is by the operation of God's truth, as contained in God's Word, on the heart and life, through the intellect, that men are sanctified. We can yield our bodies to holiness only through righteousness, and the Word of God is the directory of right, and the Spirit of God is the guide. This is the scheme of Jesus, and Peter, and Paul; any other must be fanaticism.

Lastly, our surest present enjoyment, and our happiest views of the future of the church, depend on our knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. The more a Christian knows of the greatness, and goodness, and wisdom, and love of Jesus, of all the grace that is to come to him in this world, and all the glory that is to come to him in the eternal world, through Jesus, the more his happiness deepens. Paul knew the value of intellectual acquirements. He did not undervalue his great learning in the ecclesiastical law of his own nation, his wide acquaintance with Roman manners, and with Greek literature and modes of thought. He was aware how these helped him in preaching to both Jews and Gentiles. But for his own personal sanctification, when he considered how utterly inoperative all this human learning was, and how his whole moral life had been changed by knowing Jesus, and how this knowledge of Jesus was the best preparation for eternity, he exclaimed: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. iii. 8). And very soon he adds: "Let us, therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded."

This, then, is our perfection of happiness, to have the knowledge of Jesus. Knowing how all truths centre in Jesus, and that Jesus has all power in heaven and in earth, what happy views a Christian takes of the future of Christ's dear flock! *They shall never be destroyed.* "The holy catholic church, which is the communion of saints," must endure for ever, and

grow, and cover the earth. There may be ebbs and tides, and in his human frailty the Christian may be more or less depressed or raised by these; but he knows that whatever else may happen to this planet, the time will certainly come when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." As the waters cover the sea? How do the waters cover the sea? How immense is the bowl of the ocean! How irregular the brim of that bowl, with its myriads of indentations, large and small! How deeper in some places, how shallower in others! Yet there is not a spot which the waters do not cover. Think of the incalculable weight of all the waters. Think how they press down and in and out, until every chink and cranny and corner and bay and river-mouth of the sea is filled and crowded by the waters.

Just so shall the knowledge of the Lord be. That faithful promise steadies our hopes. Blessed be God, that the knowledge of his name and truth shall never be lost. Blessed be God, that men shall come more and more to seek after deeper knowledge of spiritual things, as the knowledge which perishes shall fail to satisfy them. Our humanity shall not always be a babe living on milk. It shall grow into a vigorous manhood, which shall demand the strongest meat of spiritual knowledge to sustain it. The time will come—oh! it *will* come—when all the elements of knowledge so necessary to the infancy of the race, knowledge of language, and physical sciences and arts, shall be looked back upon as the beginning of human education. The time will come when the early working, toiling, pioneer life of our race shall have issued into mansion and plantation and leisure, and man shall find time for culture in spiritual things. Blessed are the men who shall aid the generations of humanity forward toward this large and wealthy place! Thrice blessed are the men who have the self-control to take some time from the hungry struggle for money, to grow in their spirits, until they shall delight in doctrine, and feed with a relish on that "strong meat" which "belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have *their senses* exercised to discern both good and evil."

THE SCIENTIFIC ART OF PREACHING.

BY REV. STEPHEN H. TYNG, JUN., NEW YORK.

"From that time Jesus began to preach."—MATTHEW iv. 17.

THIS was a day of days for our fallen world. It is a day not marked in the calendar of great events. It has no historical record outside this simple story of Matthew. It is scorned by philosophy and scoffed at by worldly folly, and yet—the world being witness—it was a day of days; for from that day Jesus began to preach. Then the words of Heaven's great Covenant were first formed in the dialect of sinful speech. Then were sounded those many voices which awakened the intellect of the world, so long in bondage, aroused the conscience so cruelly seared and paralyzed, the will so strangely perverted, while it wrought wonders in lives which had been theretofore degraded and misused. "From that time Jesus began to preach." Thenceforth earth had a Gospel, love a consecration and a motive, godliness a perfect manifestation among men. From Capernaum sprang those mighty influences of true preaching which have made men human, consciously accountable, and zealous in all good works to the glory of God. O, Capernaum, thou wast indeed exalted that day to heaven. Back to thy ruins by the sea-side must Christian thought now wander, for there is the scene and thence was the source of those manifold instrumentalities of sacred speech which has given Christendom its new name, men new natures, and filled heaven with redeemed and perfected souls.

From that day Jesus has never ceased to preach. The thirty years of his manual toil were past. His public baptism by the forerunner had taken place. His threefold temptation in the wilderness had qualified him now for the entrance upon his public ministry. John the Baptist, his forerunner, who preached in his name, was cast into prison by the cruelty of Herod : and now, he that was to come, the last and the greatest, enters upon the mission for which he was sent of the Father. His yearnings are towards his own city. To them will this great heart, charged with heaven's secret, first overflow. Prophecy must be fulfilled. For Isaiah declares that the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations, was to be the horizon from which the great light should rise to light the people who sat in darkness, and bring comfort to them who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death. From this day this ministry of preaching began, Jesus called his disciples one by one, and commanded them to go through all the cities, "And as you go, preach." Very soon after, he went with them to the top of a mountain, and there delivered that discourse which we call the Sermon on the Mount, as the model for all preaching, and the true definition of the doctrine which he himself came to promulgate. He entered into the synagogues, and wrought a change in the form of their discourses and expositions by the book of prophecies, and applied them to himself. He went from this day at Capernaum, as the starting-point. He preached everywhere : in the synagogues, in the market-place, by the wayside, in the courts of the temple, by the water, from the sea-side, and from boats. Therefore the Christ was known and recognized as the Preacher. And from the top of Olivet, when his great sacrificial work was over, his last farewell to earth emphasized the importance of those three years of labour. "Go ye into all the world," said he to his disciples, "and preach the Gospel to every creature." Good friends, here is an instrumentality which can never become obsolete. Here is an institution which is never to be supplanted. Here is a privilege

which God will never revoke. Here is an obligation which no human being is permitted to evade. The disciples entered upon this office instantly Christ had ascended. The authority by which they spake was the same authority, for Christ Jesus had filled them with the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, and they spake even as he gave them the words. But the days of inspiration have passed, and yet it is certainly true that if Christ abides in the believer, and his life manifests itself through that believer's life, so will his speech control the believer's speech; yea, having the mind of Christ and the heart of Christ, he shall speak with the tongue of Christ unto the world; and it shall be no more his speech, but that of Christ who controls him—who speaks through him. Have you not often recognised a power in human words, when they have come to you in the Lord's name, and in accordance with the Gospel, which is beyond that of human persuasion or argument? What is every conversion, what every return to the Lord, and every consecrated life—what all submission and patience in the midst of trial—save the voice of Jesus speaking through the broken reeds of human utterance—the wind of the Spirit still blowing with power through the world?

I. Now I would insist upon the prominence given to preaching in the Church of God; and my first point will be that this text marks the *introduction of a new science*. Good Christian people are sometimes afraid of that word science, it is so often perverted. It has become such a bugbear in the way of devotional study, that they hesitate to accept it as applicable to the things of God's Gospel and God's Church. But what is science, after all, except the detailed arrangement of facts and truths? Natural science is the description of the things which God has created in this world, and their arrangement in ranks and orders and classes and species, according to their similarities and their differences. Botany is the study of these flowers, and the correct adjustment and appointment of each of the great features which are found in every one, in the declaration of their relation and their independence. Even so, he who studies the mind

classifies the memory, the abstraction, the imagination—all the powers which go to make up the mental constitution. He who studies the moral nature of man analyzes and arranges, according to a science, the component parts of man's affection and will and purpose and springs of action. So did our Lord establish a science of preaching; and it is for us to look down upon the life he lived on the earth and the things he spake, and so to arrange those facts that form the system as to eliminate a science; so to dispose them as to demonstrate the principles by which he was governed, and which he appointed to be the foundation of this new science. Just as the science of architecture is formed by the observation of brace and arch and turret, and the effect and operation of each, and careful study of the laws by which each supports the other, the measure of weight and consequence which the different parts have in the whole structure—so in the science of preaching, is it by the careful examination of the principles of our Lord's own work and ministry, and the words which he employed, that we are to arrive at the fundamental facts for which we now seek.

1. Our Lord might have instituted this agency without preaching himself. He might have sent an angel from heaven to preach the everlasting Gospel. But it was a part of his great scheme of benevolence and mercy that he should give us an example for ever, beyond all imitation, and yet so presenting in active use the principles of this new science that men might the more plainly apprehend it. Now just what preaching consists of is the great question of this generation. The pulpits of churches are filled with men who profess to preach, and who do not preach. Let us then take the words of our Lord himself. You will find that three Greek words (and I am not going to be pedantic—I will give you the result of thought and examination)—you will find that three Greek words are used in the New Testament, and translated “preach” in connection with our Lord's ministry. It is a peculiar infelicity of our translation that the word “preach” combines so many of these original and different expressions. Among the three that are most prominent is the word that we

have now read as "evangelize," which means to declare good tidings—good news; and this word is found more than fifty times in the New Testament; as, "The poor have the Gospel 'preached' to them;" "How beautiful are the feet of them that 'preach' the Gospel of peace." The next word is that which literally means to declare as a herald—to proclaim as a crier, or as an ambassador. It is found in the text, "As you go, 'preach,' saying, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand;'" and in the other text, "What you hear in the ear, that 'preach' ye upon the housetops." This word is found sixty times in the New Testament, and fifty-four out of the sixty times is it translated "preach."

A third word implies argumentation, and is sometimes rendered reasoned or disputed, and at other times preached; as, when we read in the seventeenth chapter of Acts, seventeenth verse: "Then disputed he" (Paul) "in the synagogue with the Jews;" and in the twentieth chapter of the same book: "And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep; and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead." This word is almost exclusively used in connection with the ministry of Paul. Besides these three, there are two other expressions occasionally used, the one implying haste, and the other freedom, familiarity. An example of the first will be found in Colossians first chapter, twenty-eighth verse: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily." The second occurs in the second chapter of Mark, at the second verse: "And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them." Now as far as this principle of the science goes, therefore, we have reached three definitions: first, preaching is to *tell good tidings*; second, preaching is to tell good tidings as an *ambassador*, as a herald; and third, to persuade men, by

arguments and reasoning, to accept the good tidings which are thus to be brought to their attention. Now, from the time that the Christmas angels carolled good will to men, until the heavens received our Lord and Master again, this was the distinctive character of his preaching. From the day that John Baptist pointed to Jesus, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God," until the day when our Lord was taken in the temple in the declaration of his mission as a preacher, the distinctive features of his ministry were these three. His whole work found in these its expression. And when Philip went through Samaria, he went as an ambassador; and when Paul sat in the synagogues at Damascus and at Ephesus, and at his own hired house at Rome, and in the Roman prison, this was the peculiarity of his ministry. Wherever Gospel preaching was heard in the first ages of the Church, these were the characteristics by which it was recognized.

2. Now from these historical facts, in the description of which we gain these words, it will not be difficult to deduce the underlying principles of this Divine science of preaching—that it is the announcement of glad tidings, the presence of an ambassador as the one announcing, and the pressure upon men by arguments which address the understanding, the conscience, the will, the affections, and control the lives, to accept and to live out this news that has come from heaven. Now more than this is in no passage required. Less than this is not Gospel preaching. And yet there are multitudes of systems which now-a-days profess to preach, and do not. That scheme which comes in the form of legalism, binding upon men certain things to be done as a condition of everlasting life and acceptance, is opposed to the evangelizing principle of this science that came to tell good news—something that God has done; and not to enjoin something upon man to do that God may be appeased. That system which abases the preacher, and gives prominence to the priesthood in the offering of sacrifices in the Church of God, offends against the second principle of the science, and comes not as a herald, not as a crier charged with tidings, but as a

mediator to propitiate a God who has no good news to tell. That system which loves to evolve and develop from its own consciousness and the principles of its own nature which lasts for a day, and then proves to be folly, is opposed to the third condition—reasoning and argument—which strengthens us and exalts us, and is a distinguishing mark of true preaching. I have to say to you that our Lord has thus made prominent this new science with these as its principles. Whatever be your sphere of ministry, adopt them, live them out. Let all truth be taught in harmony with the Gospel, but emphasize the Cross of Christ as a central fact—the good news that God has given you to declare to guilty man. Do it as those who have received an errand from on high. Meet men with arguments adapted to the plane of life and the condition of souls where you find them.

II. But, secondly, this text gives us the *inauguration of a new art*. I hesitate not to say that preaching was original with Jesus Christ. The world never knew it until this day at Capernaum. And yet I stop to qualify the statement, because so far as preaching is oral it has to do with logic, with rhetoric, with eloquence; and the Augustan age of these was that which preceded the coming of Christ. The literature of the world was rich in these before Christ spake. They had been employed in tribune, forum, senate, and academic groves. Judges and orators were many, and forensic discussions among the people general. But still I assert that preaching was a new art. A world-wide field was now given to speech. An additional responsibility was now confided to the speaker. A new combination and a new adaptation of all the old elements of human persuasion and argument were designed and appointed by Christ. The elements are not novel, but the art is new notwithstanding. The elements of no art are new. A new art is a re-combination and a re-adjustment of old elements; therefore preaching stands as the bow in the clouds. It was there before Noah's day, but it had this new adaptation and relation to God's promise from that day on; and he who looks at it to-day thinks not so much of the physical matter which forms

it, as the great truth of which it stands as the memorial painted on the sky. So is preaching a new application of old elements. Now, science and art differ from one another as the understanding differs from the will—as the indicative differs from the imperative mood. Science deals with facts; art deals with precepts. Science is a collection of truths; art is a body of rules. Science says, “I know that I may know;” art says, “I know that I may do.” Science is speculative art; art is practical science. This is the difference between the two; and preaching has these two distinct sides: it is a science—it is an art.

1. But I would rapidly show you that *this is a new science*. It was not in existence in patriarchal times. We begin at the beginning. There are four persons spoken of in the Old Testament as preachers. Noah preached of righteousness; Solomon, who spake three thousand proverbs, is styled the Wise Preacher; Jonah was sent to Nineveh to preach the word that God bade him; and Enoch is said by Jude to have been a preacher in the earliest dispensation of all. But no one of these had glad tidings to tell. Not one of these came forth as the announcer, the ambassador, of glad tidings. Not one of them reasoned. They did not in their ministry evolve the principles of Christian preaching. Their work was local and temporary, relating simply to responsibilities which were then pressing. Not one foretells the things which Christ himself has so abundantly declared, save as we send back the light of the finished Gospel upon their enigmatical words, and read the precepts of Jesus in the instructions they gave to the people. These had the same relation as the ark, the mercy-seat, and the table of shew-bread had to Christ. They were the types and shadows of the reality and substance that Christ should inaugurate.

2. *Preaching was not a Jewish institution.* The whole Jewish Church was governed by the priesthood. They pictured; they did not preach. It was a pantomime. Little was said, save at the times of the feast, when the Hallel was sung by the people.

The whole tendency of their office was anything but towards humanity and spiritual truth. He who doubts this has only to read the conduct of the high-priesthood in the days of our Lord to see to what a depth they had degenerated in enmity and bitterness towards a poor, outcast, defenceless man. We cannot find preaching in the temple. Can we find it in the synagogue? No; for there it was simply the exposition of the law, and its application to conduct. It fails to meet the principles of this new science. It is not the art that we practise. The prophetic dispensation was engaged only by anticipation upon the glad tidings. The major part of their work had to do with the sins and calamities of the people whom they addressed. There is nothing in the Jewish Church which is other or more than a suggestion of Christian preaching as an art.

3. But, again, *preaching was not practised among the Gentiles*. Rich in all the elements and results of eloquence were these nations outside the Scripture fold; yet where is there one man who approached this ideal which the Christian preached? If the preacher be a bee, gathering God's truth from all the sources of God's revelations of himself in nature and in his word, then these Gentile teachers were spiders evolving a web from themselves that was to last only so long as they spun. They were speculative wholly. They had oracles; but these were so vague as to be only the sport of their keen minds. And, besides, they had no voice for the people; they taught in schools. They had so little comfort and encouragement for men that they were rejected by the people for whom they wrote. Whilst in all affairs of state, in the beautiful fancies of poetry, in the strong grasp of political argument, the writers and the speakers of the Gentile nations have since had no peers, yet they had no preachers.

4. That this art was necessarily original with Christ I think is easily shown on the positive side; because until Jesus Christ lived and died there was *no good news to be told*. It was impossible that the first principle of the science should be evolved. No human being lived with the mission to announce it as a

herald and an ambassador of God. There were no arguments to new motives and exertions by which men could be persuaded. All such are rooted in his life and his religion. What a contrast would it be if I should trace the ages of preaching since Christ's ascension, and set them over against the patriarchal, and the Jewish, and the Gentile history! Would that I had time to follow down the train. The golden line of apostolic succession of preachers, from John of the Golden Mouth, and John in the Desert, and Augustine with his matchless power and his heart-burning zeal, to Luther, the stern and sturdy preacher of the Reformation, and Latimer, that man of noble nature who braved the adversities and the enmities of his times, down to the men that have been the preachers to millions—as Whitfield and Wesley, the men on our side of the water who have gone out charged with the commission to preach the Gospel to all nations and all sorts and conditions of men. These are the sacred articles of the Christian art of preaching.

III. Now, in bringing all these to a point, I would say, thirdly, that this is a *new responsibility*; and I want to be very crisp and short here. And under this head I have to say—

1. That preaching is the *sole agency for man's salvation*. This it is that gives it a dignity in the Church of God. In the affirmation of this is the denial of all other agencies or instrumentalities whatsoever. Now, my dear people, be ye bold to maintain it. Be ye watchful lest superstition should depreciate it. We live in a day and in a church in which we are publicly taught, by those who are supposed to have fraternity, that through the water of baptism the water of life enters into the soul of man. But the apostle tells us that we are renewed not by corruptible things, but by incorruptible; that it is the Word of God enshrined in the memory, dwelling in the heart, controlled by the Spirit, which brings new life to the soul of man, and quickens man for Divine consecration. The failure to emphasize preaching in the Protestant Episcopal Church has resulted during the past year in the diminution of the candidates for holy orders by *one-third*. We are living in a generation when men

decline to be machines; when manhood revolts against any other influence of a moral nature except that which comes through the intellect. The church that defames and outgrows the prominence of preaching will ultimately have only a dwarfed and stunted intellectuality in its preachers, and but a limited number of them at best. For us, we are to listen to the word of God as our life, for through it comes life to our souls. When we are cast down, we are to listen for it as the sound of rain in the tops of the trees that shall refresh us. When, in our days of exaltation, we are influenced beyond measure by earthly things, we are to listen for it as the voice of the Lord that moveth through the stars. When our souls are faint and famished, we are to listen for it as the silent dew, the manna, the angels' food that cometh from heaven, through human utterance and human language, but still Divine in itself and its influence. It is the sole agency for salvation, therefore has its prominence in the Church, and therefore is it to be given free course by Christians.

2. But then I say, secondly, it is the *unlimited privilege of all believers*. Now I use the word privilege wittingly. I know there are some of us who are charged with the responsibility of public preaching. I do not read in my New Testament that the privilege is confined to them. It was to the brethren that the Lord gave the command to preach; for whilst it is peculiarly the duty of those who are set apart in the congregation for this official work, there are no castes in Christ's Church, there are no orders appointed by Christ himself. The ministry is not through ranks and other distinctions. These are results of the Godly expediency and adaptation of the ages, and the providence of God and the Spirit of God rule in the form of the Church. It comes down to each one of you as your privilege. O ye mothers, preach glad tidings with the voice of an ambassador, with arguments adapted to the condition of each heart and conscience committed to your charge! There is a terrible lack of this family preaching, an evasion of the duty, a failure to avail ourselves of the privilege. O ye fathers, preach by example, by *precept*, by conscious and unconscious influence! Let the Word

of God dwell in your heart richly. Let the spring overflow at the fountain, that others may be refreshed by the grace that God has given to you in the apprehension of his truth. Ye men of business, ye women of society, if ye be true to your allegiance, if ye be true to your vows, then this is the peculiar obligation which ye bear everywhere, and from which ye never can be absolved until Jesus welcomes you with, "Well done." If ye would always have the Holy Ghost with you, then always be blessing men with glad tidings, and ye shall be watered yourselves in turn.

THE SECRET OF A TRUE LIFE.

BY REV. STEPHEN H. TYNG, JUN., NEW YORK.

"I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."—GAL. ii. 20.

THERE is no lack of personality in the terms of this passage. There is no evasion in the application of the glorious privileges which are here described. Every pronoun is particular and personal. "I live." "Loved me." "Gave himself for me."

It is always, even in worldly life, a subject of curiosity to discover the secret of our fellow men's influence and success. The greater the impression they make upon the community and the generation, the wider the respect that they command from their fellows; the purer and the more consecrated the character that they manifest, the more exacting is curiosity to know how they live. The world looks to craft and subtlety and tact as the explanation of success. In whatsoever life there is a manifest absence of these, and yet a demonstration of power and recognition of the person, the world sees a wonder, which excites doubt and questioning. This same peculiarity of mind and life exists in a greater degree among professing believers. What marvels of endurance, what great enterprises of endeavour, what sufferings borne, what works accomplished by timid, halting, unintelligent, untrained people, does the history of the Church record! Tried by any worldly test, men would have declared them impotent in the presence of such responsibility, and have prophesied failure when the trial should come. And yet have they been conquerors, and more than conquerors, over every embarrassment and persecution in their path. The believer, with a keener curiosity than the *man of the world* ever had, seeks to know the secret of his life.

A worldly man may be interested when Paul tells the peculiarity of his own impulses and the controlling motive of his obedience; because, had that life of Paul been written in any other book than the Bible, it would have challenged the attention of all admirers of heroism. It is only the fact that Paul's biography is contained within the pages of a sacred book, which shuts out the recognition of his influence from the observation of the unbelieving world. A man of grand mental power, of great subtlety as a dialectician, skilled in the school of philosophy, of chief rank among his own people, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, concerning the law blameless, looked up to as the deliverer of the chosen people from a superstition which was now threatening to lead multitudes astray—he in an instant turns about. The thing that he once persecuted he now pursues; the persons that he once hated he now loves; he goes through distresses, afflictions, perils, trials of every sort, controlled by some unconfessed secret power, evermore rejoicing, even though the circumstances of his life were so depressing.

The matchless man of the Church of God in all its history; the hero of great spiritual toils and trials, as the world must recognize him: the Apostle Paul, converted Saul of Tarsus, tells us in his text the quiet working and impulse of his own spirit. "I live." Do you ask me how? Sustained by what? Compelled by what? "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." But these words are not simply biographical. They stand as the expression of every believer's privilege. He may enter his own name for the "I," and he may apply his own personality for the me. Even as in our relations here we take a pledge, and "I" is named by him who administers the oath, and we repeat our own name, is the form of the expression. "I, Stephen Tyng, live by the faith of the Son of God:" "I" (each one of you may supply the parenthesis) "live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me" (then enter your name again), "and gave himself for me." So particular, so personal, is the privilege of faith and the faculty with which we are endowed by God's gift.

Now, I desire to attempt to-day, because there is the pressure of the Spirit of God upon my own mind, an analysis of this passage. I strive for no great things. I seek to make plain this most important privilege, and to impress it upon your consciences and heart. I am to attempt an analysis of this passage, and yet the truths are so interwoven that it is almost impossible to tear them apart. He loved, he gave himself for me; therefore I live. This is the relation of the different statements it contains.

1. Here is a *Glorious Lover*. The Son of God loved me, and gave himself for me. To whom is not the consciousness of being loved a grateful and a pleasing fact in life? Where lives the misanthrope, really, sincerely, truly such, in the world? Who is there so absolutely isolated from his fellows as to be indifferent to the emotions of those who are of his own generation and occupy some relation to him? I hesitate not to affirm that I verily believe every life before me is controlled and consecrated by a consciousness that somebody loves it. I know not who it may be. I know not through what relation the love may flow—that which dignifies character and energizes conduct is the consciousness of a love outside itself, towards itself, seeking for a reciprocation of such affection from the soul. I pity that person who has nobody to love him. I pity more that person who does not know that somebody loves him. But lest there should be one so isolated in all social relations, behold the Glorious Lover, who reveals himself in his presence to us all! He, the Son of God, loved me.

The greater the person, sometimes, the more highly prized the love. This is the sycophancy of the world. Station intensifies our own appreciation of the one who is in affection bound to us. At least, the more worthy the person, the greater our consciousness and appreciation of the love. And he presents himself, who was in the beginning with God, who was God, who was the Word of God—by which he describes himself to man; who is the Word of God, by which man speaks back to God; who is the Life, coming into a condition of condemnation, and making a natural immortality an eternal placid-

ness in the life that now is, and extended through the eternities to come; who is the Light, illuminating, restraining, cheering, comforting, arousing those to whom he appears—he of whom the Father saith, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;” whose love is like the Deity, an omnipotent love, all the gates of hell cannot prevail against it; an omnipresent love, never is there a condition of life in which it does not prove itself; an omniscient love, reaching down even to the unknown and unrecognised condition and wants of the soul—he it is of whom it is declared, “The Son of God loved me.” And, dear friends, to rightly estimate such love, and the love of such a person, fills heaven with wonder, and hell with terrible remorse. To have the fact determined and declared to us, and yet to decline to recognise the fact, is the startling marvel of unbelief. “They love darkness rather than light”—love sin rather than purity—love the world rather than the Christ—“because their deeds are evil.”

2. If this be the Glorious Lover, then again I find here the *Gracious Act of Love*. It has its reason in itself: he loved because he loved—not for the perception of that which was desirable and lovable in the soul; not for any expected return from the one to whom this wealth of affection is declared. It is a love like unto his own nature, flowing from the depths of his own purity and wisdom and justice and truth and power. Every perfection is mingled with this love of him who, loving in the beginning, has promised to love unto the end. This gracious act of love, that the apostle describes, is connected with every office that Jesus Christ has assumed. He is our Prophet: then his love stoops to teaching, to instructing, to illuminating, to edifying our souls in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, our Lord. He is our Priest: his love is a justifying love, putting to our account the infinite merits of his own obedience and atonement. He is our King: his love is a soul-conquering, a sin-destroying love within our hearts and our lives. He is our Shepherd: his love is a leading love in the ways of righteousness; a feeding love in the green pastures; a love of repose by the waters of life. He is our Surety: his love is a debt-paying love; all the

demands of God's law and justice he freely assumes and cancels. He is the doer for us, and his love is an active love. He was a sufferer, and his love was a passive, bearing, enduring love. What is his name? He is the everlasting Father, and it is a pitying love. He is the husband, wedded to one soul: it is a cherishing love. He is the physician in our time of disease and infirmity: it is a healing love; "by his stripes we are healed." He is our friend to help in every time of need; our advocate, to plead our cause before the throne on high; our mediator, to interpose himself between us and every danger, that it may be averted. In all these many, peculiar, interlaced relations does this Christ-love make itself known. He is the God-man loving the fallen man. But note in this analysis that the past tense is used: "He loved me, and gave himself for me." Ah! when did it begin? Our thoughts go back to that glorious council in eternity, when God devised his plan of redemption, and his was a consulting love. From the heights of glory he descended, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in all things like unto his brethren, that he might redeem: it was a performing love. He spoke the word of promise in the application of this great work to our souls: it is a promising love. This is the matchless fact. I ask you not whether you feel it; I care not, as yet, whether one soul feels it here. I propound it to you as a statement of fact. He, the lover, himself loved us from all eternity, and in these different relations and methods has manifested and proved his divine affection.

3. But then again, in this analysis, *Who is the loved one?* "He loved me." "Paul, who art thou?" "A persecutor, injurious blasphemer, a murderer in my heart, disobedient, without natural affection." "Did he love thee, Paul?" "He loved me, and gave himself for me." Well may we wonder when such a confession is made. That the Son of God should love the glorious angels, who had never fallen, who basked in the sunlight of his acceptance before the Majesty of the Father—this would not be astounding. That the Son of God should love you, brother, and you, my sister, who are saints in your

heart, and who have been developed by the Spirit of Grace to holiness of experience and living—this is not to me a wonder. That God should love inanimate creation, in the beauty of its formation and testimony to himself—this excites no marvel. But that he should stoop to the condition of an enemy, a sinner, a being whose thoughts are selfish from morning till night, save as his selfishness is interrupted by the home relation for the moment; that God should stoop in this matchless affection to the condition of one who not only could not, but would not, love him in return; that heaven should love earth; that eternity should love death; that immortality should love that which was dust and ashes and impurity—this is the mystery of godliness—this is the marvel of marvels which the Book of God reveals, and which, without the testimony of this Book of God, would be an absolutely incomprehensible and impossible statement; the mind of man never would accept it, never would credit it. “He first loved us.” But some of us cannot say this, “He loved me.” Why not? Why not? Where is the trouble? I tell thee, brother, it is the language of Heaven to say that. Look at the first chapter of the Book of Revelations, the fifth verse, and you will find that the heavenly spirits confess “unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” Thou must learn the heavenly language before thou canst use Paul’s confession. Only the mouth of faith can syllable these words. Every other tongue stammers and stutters in striving to express the words. Pride, unbelief, keep back the acknowledgment.

4. And so we come to another point in this analysis: not only the glorious lover and the gracious act of love, and the guilty loved one, but here we have the *Love Gift* described: “he gave himself.” What so precious as the token of love? The proof is added to the affection. Great care is taken to guard the voluntariness and the freeness of our Lord’s action. He did not sell himself; he did not lease himself; he did not rent himself: he gave himself. It was not a joint act. He gave himself. And the apostle Peter takes up the same expression when he

says, "Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree." "He trod the wine-press alone." Of the people there was none with him. To this glorious gift of himself there was no necessity compelling but his own love, nothing inviting in man's condition; nothing in the government constraining; only the love of the Son of God is proved in this gift of himself. Now, what is the substance of this gift? How vainly shall we strive to measure it! He gave himself—his person. He was man: he gave his manhood to suffer in our stead. He was God: he gave his deity to satisfy the demands which were written against man. He gave himself as the God-man, capable of suffering, competent to atone. He gave himself—his position. In how many different words is it described through this Book! He gave himself as a ransom, his soul as an offering for sin, as a propitiation before God. We have received through himself the atonement. He became a curse for us. By how many different expressions does the Spirit seek to develop this one truth, that he gave himself for us!

But, after having thus bestowed himself for us, he gave himself to us. With all the accomplishment of his finished life, with all the merit of his ascended condition, with all the fidelity of his affection and friendship, he bestowed himself; so that Christ Jesus, the Son of God, is the possession and the portion of every believer—both the giver and the gift—and the apostle says well in the context, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live." If crucified, then dead, "nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

I have finished my analysis. We have found in this text a glorious lover: the Son of God; a gracious act: "he loved me;" a guilty loved one: "he loved me;" and the love gift: "he gave himself for me." And now, Christian believer, if this be true, it is true because God says it. We have no other evidence. It is a fact which passes all our anticipation, and in proof of *which* no less than God's voice is to be accounted of any value.

He has said it: we believe it. Before we feel it, before it produces any result or change in our heart or life, we accept it as a fact, and syllable the apostle's words, "He loved me, and gave himself for me."

If this be a believed fact by you, I submit to you, ought you not to give yourself to him? I do not mean by a profession of religion merely. I sometimes wish there was no profession, in the technical expression. It is often made a cover for very much coldness. But, brother, if you really believe this fact, and it has become a primal motive of your life, then ought you to give yourself to him, who hath given himself to you, in a consecration which shall not only be conscious, but be recognised among men, so that others may test their lives by the faith of the Son of God. Not by craft, not by self-reliance, not by shrewdness, not by perseverance; nay, these are all subsidiary to this impulse or motive—he lives by the faith of the Son of God. How ought we to revenge the blood of Jesus? By leaving our own lusts. Our own sins that drew his blood must themselves be mortified and destroyed, if we believe this truth. If we believe it, then must we give ourselves for him. This he did for us. Is there any soul willing to die for Jesus Christ, who died for him? Is there one believer who, if the time of choosing the alternative should come, would rather burn or be torn asunder, than deny the Lord who bought him: I believe that there are many. The Church of God is as full of the martyr spirit to-day as it ever was. But truly it is a harder thing to live for Christ than it is to die for him. It takes more motive day by day, in the labours and the trials of life, to say, "This I do for Christ," than it does to lie down in the dust. It would be a welcome place for some of us, whatsoever may be the chariot of God that calls us above. Nay, nay, to live for Christ is a struggle and a privilege and a joy which springs from faith; to live in open acknowledgment of him, and be not ashamed of him.

Then if this fact be true, how much may we expect from him? The argument is that he who withheld not his only Son from us, how shall he not with him also freely give us all

things. There is no danger of knocking too often at Heaven's door; there is no danger of troubling Jesus Christ with my wants; there is no end to the receptacle of sorrows and needs, which he has prepared in his own sympathy and love. It is his responsibility to care for those who thus accept this fact, and he has promised, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Oh, Christian believer! did you thus live in the acknowledgment of God's testimony concerning you, men all about us would be asking the secret of your lives, and strive to follow you even as you followed Christ.

But now I must say a word to those who have not believed this fact; and, my dear friends, *this is the first truth* that everybody that ever was saved, or ever will be saved, must accept: "He loved me; he gave himself for me." Open the shutters; let in the light. Take away the barriers; let in the joy. The first truth is a glad truth, that everyone of us may take right to himself. "Ah!" but some one says, "How am I warranted to say me? I can say he loved and gave himself for sinners. How can I say me?" Unless you have a sense of personal need; unless you have been aroused by God's spirit to care for these things, you never can say it; you go down to death and condemnation without ever knowing this fact. Therefore the first thing for those of you who are impenitent and indifferent is to believe the other fact stated in the same Scriptures, that you are condemned already; that the wrath of a holy and loving God rests upon you. Live as you are now living, think as you are now thinking, love as you are now loving, and you go, brother, by the necessity of your own character, into darkness and death. Oh! if you stood as often as I am called upon to do by an open grave, you would lose all sense of the contingencies and restraints of this world. One dear friend, in the hour before his departure, said to me (and the words have been a comfort ever since the midnight in which they were spoken), "You have been faithful to my soul; you have told me the truth; you have not tried to conceal from me the fact. If I am not saved, you are not to blame." And yet I trust that he passed into the peace of God

before he died. I have too great responsibilities upon these shoulders and this heart to care much for human opinion in this congregation. God has taken that from me ; but I do declare to you, men, fathers, and brethren of this people, that if you die as you now live, you will be lost for ever. I declare it on the basis of this Word of God. It is not my own doctrine. Would to God it were not so ! If you believe that fact, I ask you to believe this other countervailing fact : “ He loved you ; he gave himself for you.” Why will you refuse so gracious a declaration ? Do you *fear to presume*—*can* you presume—upon a promise so broad ? “ Him that cometh unto me I will in wise cast out.” Do you say you are not godly, and that he well may love your wife, your children, your brother, your sister, because they are godly ? Were they godly when he loved them ? Were they not such as you are in all their principles of character when he revealed himself to them ? Do you say, “ Well, I cannot be so particular ; I cannot say me ? ” My dear friend, he has described you as clearly as though he had called your name. He has drawn a line all about your condition, and said, “ This is salvation ; do not step over it ; do not sin against it ; do not depart from it ; accept and live upon the truth. He needs you in his love. You need him in your sin. Oh ! that you might, in the simplicity of a heart purpose say, “ I believe the fact. I believe it because God says it. I will rest upon it : he loved me ; he gave himself for me.” If you will believe it, it is his business to make you feel it, and his holy spirit, which is working with us this hour, will deepen within your hearts the conviction of your need, and fill you with a peace that you can never understand.

But the first act is yours—believe you can believe. There is no necessity of trying to believe it. There is no need of praying to believe it. You can believe it. Every man and woman who does not believe this truth calls God a liar, because he believes not the witness that God hath given of his Son. God keep you from that dark sin, and bring you to the knowledge and the reciprocation of your Saviour’s love and gift.—Amen

CHRISTIAN SALUTATION.

BY REV. STEPHEN H. TYNG, JUN., NEW YORK.

"Salute every saint in Christ Jesus."—PHILIPPIANS iv. 21.

WHO in all the world lives in harmony with the letter, still more with the spirit, of this great Christian law? How many comments upon it really limit its latitude? How many man-made and Church-enforced commandments are utterly inconsistent with its requirements? How much emotion that passes for Christian experience in the world is condemned by its very utterance? And yet it stands; and after knowledge shall have vanished away, after faith shall have been lost in fruition, after hope shall have been swallowed up in attainment, it shall still stand, the great fundamental of the Church of God, who is love, and who so loved the world as to send his only begotten Son. That which offends this rule of Christian life, or is subversive of it, no matter by what authority originated, or by what sanctions and penalties applied and executed, has no binding force upon conscience or life. This is the higher law, which overrides all contradictory enactments. This is the new commandment which supplements and is the consummation of the ten. "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

At Anworth, a little village in Scotland, this new commandment found expression in the casual, yet considered association

of two of the greatest men in the seventeenth century. The little town of Anworth was the home and the pride of that sweet soul, Rutherford, the Covenanter. One Saturday evening, so the story runs, his household were gathered together for their usual cotter's Saturday night's devotions, when an alarm was heard at the outer door. A stranger sought admission. He was welcomed with true hospitality, and took his place in the circle of those who were then answering the varied questions in the Catechism. It so chanced that the question, "How many commandments are there?" came to this new-comer, as the one to which he was to make reply, and instantly he answered, "Eleven." "What!" said Rutherford; "a man so experienced in life as you seem to be, and so educated in the law and the Scripture of God, not to know that there are but ten commandments!" The stranger answered, "'A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.'" Startled by the answer, Rutherford proceeded with his service. The next morning, before the hour of service, he walked from his humble manse along that pathway which is still spoken of as "Rutherford's Walk," towards the little church. It was early in the day, and he scarcely expected to meet any one in the path; but over in the wood he heard the voice of some one in supplication. The moment he listened he recognised the stranger's tone. He sought him out, and demanded to know who he was. The stranger answered, "My name is Usher." He was the Lord Bishop and Primate of all Ireland. Having heard much of the piety of the Presbyterian Rutherford, he had, in this secret way, sought his society that he might judge for himself. Their hearts flowed together in the common devotion which they both felt toward the Lord Jesus, their Master; and when the hour of service came, together the Covenanter and the prelate walked to the little Anworth church, and Usher of Ireland preached to the Covenanters of Scotland on the new commandment, that "ye love one another." His presence there, his welcome there, his spirit and his words, were expositions of the truth of that which the Lord gave as the summing up of his own life and the last tendency of his great

Gospel. This is the law which Paul voices in the charge to the Philippians, "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus."

This text, though occurring at the close of the Epistle to the Philippians, is really the key-note which makes all its parts harmonious and intelligible. Paul had received at the hands of Epaphroditus, a brother truly beloved, a commission of ministry and gratitude from his Philippian friends; and now, writing from the Roman prison a letter sent by the hand of Epaphroditus, he recognizes this service in some words of counsel and cheer. How beautifully does he speak of that he had received! "Having received from Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God," is his testimony to the people of whom he writes in the first chapter of the epistle, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now." He had peculiar ties to Philippi: a man of Macedonia called to him at Troas, "Come over into Macedonia and help us;" and early the next morning he sought the ship that was to carry him to Neapolis, the port of Philippi. Immediately he associated with the few devout women who were accustomed to worship outside the limits of the city, and found Lydia of Thyatira, whose heart the Lord opened, and with whom he made his home. He cast out the spirit of divination from the girl who had brought great gain to her masters, and for this, falsely accused by the people, was arraigned before the authorities and committed to prison; and not only to prison, but to the inner prison; nor only so, but was made fast in chains and in the stocks. Throughout the night God gave them the spirit of song (for Silas was his companion), and in the middle of the night an earthquake shook the prison. The doors flew open, the jailor was aroused, the Word was preached unto him, his cry of penitence was heard, and his question answered, and he and his family became obedient unto the Word of God. After the *manly* stand that the apostle took, the next day, when he faced the colonial authorities, because they had scourged him who was

a Roman and still uncondemned, the brethren, when he was released, sent him to Thessalonica. There was he persecuted, and from thence he went to Berea, and so towards Athens. But there is no epistle which so overflows with personal tenderness, and is so full of personal expressions, as that to the Philippians. They were not plagued in Philippi, as they were in the church of the Galatians, by Judaizing teachers; they were not divided by party spirit, as in the church at Corinth; and Paul strikes the very tone of all true Christian life and Christian doing, when he writes to his loving, intimate associates such a charge and salutation as this. Happy are the people who are in such a case. The Christian life is an impossibility in this world, unless the spirit of mutual, helpful, considerate love be sedulously cultivated.

That we may intelligently strive to obey this apostolic charge, let us see what the text contains.

1. First of all, I find here the *description of the true believer*. "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus." He is a saint in Christ Jesus. This is not the title by which the apostles called themselves; it is the term they applied to those to whom they were called to minister, and whom, by the grace of God, they had gathered into the Christian Church. The epistles abound with expressions of their own self-contempt. Their estimate of their own personal attainments was very low. "Sinners, of whom I am chief," wrote such an one as Paul the aged. "Lest having preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." "I am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of Christ." These are the peculiar expressions which this great apostle applies to himself. Yet were they not therefore strangers to joy because often so burdened with contrition, and so depressed with self-contempt. Nay, nay; he that was least in his personal judgment of himself still claimed all that there is in Christ, the offices, the promises, the fulness of the person of his glorious, exalted Saviour. Towards Jesus all looked bright; towards themselves all was dark—nothing of experience; nothing of attainment; nothing of purpose; nothing of consecration! They bemoaned

their deficiencies, and page after page witnesses to their deploring spirit. But they were lifted up in exaltation instantly they contemplated their privileges through Christ. They were overwhelmed at the sight of the sin-side of their own characters : they were overjoyed when they contemplated the Christ-side of their own and their neighbour's lives. Hence all their injunctions about charity, which believeth all things, which endureth all things, which hopeth all things ; hence all their commands about bearing the infirmities of the weak, and so fulfilling the law of love. Whilst depressed in themselves, they ever looked to the Christ-attainment and privileges of those to whom they spake. They saw no man after the flesh, but always as God regards every believer, even as they were in Christ Jesus. Now, it is a blessed symptom of true health of soul when man begins to make the most of his fellow-men ; when he covers up the defects, when he forgets the scars, when he stands on the housetop to declare the virtues of those who are associated with him in Church and life. In honour let believers prefer one another. Let them be blind to imperfections. Let them make much of them that fear the Lord. Honour them that are in Christ Jesus, saints. Even so ; yet write down yourself a sinner.

But every believer is in Christ Jesus. This is the description. Shall I say this is the new world into which he is born again by the Spirit of God ? He enters a new life in the world. He is in, yet not of, the world. His better life is contemporaneous with the earth upon which his physical life is to be passed, yet infinitely beyond and spiritually surpassing the things which can here be appreciated and feared. In this world of Christ Jesus the believer lives a charmed life. Naught is there that can harm him or make him afraid. Over him, in the world of the Christ, are the promises which, as stars, rule the darkness of his sky, and guide him in his night marches towards the far country. Beneath him is Christ in this Christ-world ; *his support*, the loving arm upon which he leans, the loving *embrace into which he flees* in every time of conscious infirmity.

About him in this Christ-world is still Christ, the mountain of protection, the sure guardianship of his days, and his guidance in the midst of perplexities, whatsoever they may be that endanger his safety and his peace. And within him is Christ in this Christ-world. He breathes in Christ; he breathes out Christ; the pulse of his new life is Christ's life; the energy of his new life is the Christ power; all that he has, all that he is, all that he hopes to accomplish, is the working out of that which he has received from the new world into which he has by the Spirit of Christ been introduced. His first breathing of faith, like the first commotion of the lungs in the new-made life, is a gasp for the Christ that fills this world; and from the first to the last inspiration, he lives, he moves, he has his being in the person, the offices, the gracious assurances of the Saviour who has thus condescended to be his home now, and to prepare him a home more full and rich and satisfying in the world to come. The life that that believer lives is by the faith of the Son of God. What matters about the worldly life? That is dead. It was crucified with Christ. Nevertheless he lives, and oh, what a life it is! Tell me not of knowledge according to the natural man. Tell me not of passion and power according to this poor, fallen, sinful nature of ours. Tell me not of wisdom in the adaptation of means to the end. Tell me rather of that development of all the faculties of mind which he receives who is a man of God in Christ Jesus. The provisions for his daily wants; the compensations for his present sorrows; the promise for his future needs as life opens out new perplexities and embarrassments—all these are the common lot of every man who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ; and if he does not possess them, it is because he is blind to his privilege, and neglecting the fulness of the salvation to which he is called.

But then, in this description, every believer is said to be a saint in Christ Jesus. So the apostle continually addresses those to whom he sends his epistle; and yet the word can hardly have the full force that we in our vocabulary give it. It

does not necessarily mean saints sanctified in temper and disposition and living. It is rather a general expression. "Separated ones," would carry the idea of the apostle. They are the holy ; they are the separated from earth, in the very etymology of the Greek expression. So God regards them as separated ones. He speaks of them as a little flock to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom. The assurance is that he shall call them out of every nation and every people and from among those who speak every tongue, at the last day. And, indeed, there is one passage which is very significant in the Scripture, where our Lord says that the Divine retribution is withholden for the very elect's sake. So, aside from the ways of men, does God graciously look down upon that little people who by his blood have been introduced into the privileges of the Christ-life. Not only does he so regard them, but he so employs them. In the accomplishment of the great redemption, the apostle tells us he passed by angels. He sent his Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. The great Saviour condescended to be made like unto us ; to take upon him our nature, that he might in all things meet our responsibilities. Then, if the great Incarnation was the rule of God's economy, through believers, as partakers of the Divine nature, does God still manifest the perfections of his own character, and by such believers accomplish his gracious errand? Tell me, where dost thou find the type of holiness in this world except in some hidden, humble, retiring saint of God, with whom thou mayest chance sometimes to meet in thy family or thy social life? Where dost thou find true fidelity, true earnest love separated from selfishness, consecrated in benevolence and beneficence ; where save in some child of God, who, with all his infirmities and doubt and darkness, is in the world as Christ was in it, used by the Great Father to tell the evangel of his own perfections ; to impress upon the world something of that great character which was summed up in the life and the person of the Incarnate Son ? Even so his scheme of saving men, of filling up the heavenly city, is promoted by such as these. Oh ! timid, tired, tempted

disciples, ye who are liable to faint and grow lukewarm in service; ye are the agents, the messengers whom he commissions to accomplish the great work which, in the coming of the Son, was inaugurated, and which, by the promise of the Son, is continually to be sustained. And in one way they who are in Christ Jesus are esteemed of men as separate. There is a large class of men in this community who are counted out in every time of iniquity. When the tongue of man becomes vulgar, the believers in Christ, whose presence and influence are known by their testimony and their example, are instantly separated from the mass of the ungodly. There are certain things that will never be said in the presence of a true Christian man. There are certain stories which can never become the property of a true Christian man. He who stands firmly in Christ, pronounced for Christ, is marked off by the world as not of their company, and not to be entertained in their frivolity and sin. Oh! are our names thus written in heaven, as separated ones dwelling on earth? Are we regarded differently by the Great Father from the mass of the unbelieving and ungodly by whom we are surrounded? Are we thus a terror unto the evil-doers that are about us? Are we, as an army with banners, dreaded by those who are engaged in the service of sin? Blessed is thy portion, brother, if thou hast entered into this fellowship. Blessed art thou in thyself, if thou art living daily in the consciousness that this is thy relation.

But shall I go further, and say every believer is becoming more and more saintly? It is impossible to sunder these two parts of the plan of salvation; and yet many people try to do it. To be justified in the merits of Jesus Christ before God is one thing; to be sanctified in our own heart, in our own secret soul and life, is another thing. To have all the riches laid up in store for those who believe in Christ, and to enjoy an income of blessedness and assurance from the far country—this is one thing; but daily to be watching against sin, daily to be cultivating the do not's and the do's, maintaining the negative part of the Christian life, and striving towards the positive fruits of

the rich reward of them that will live godly—this is a far different thing. But, my dear friends, it is impossible to separate the two. He that is justified is daily growing, in his own heart and life, more holy. It is an unconscious process, that of sanctification. Man knows the struggle; he knows the failures; he knows the feeling of the infirmities. He does not see the other side. Shall I say he knows the wrong side of the work—he cannot see the pattern on the right side? That which passes among men, and which is recognized among men, as humility, in personal experience is a deep consciousness of undesert, a sense of personal unworthiness, so that the man dare not lift up his eyes except to say, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” That which men and God call gentleness, in the personal experience, is a continual effort to keep covetousness in, to keep the door of the heart open, to school one’s self to feel rightly, and to uphold the true thing in the society in which the life is to be passed. Brother, thou wilt never know whether thou art growing holy, except by thy deepening sense of personal unworthiness before God; and if thou hast been troubled by such thoughts as these; if thou hast been worried because thou hast made no progress in the Divine life; if thou art creeping closer and closer every day towards the foot of the cross, and looking up to the Saviour as the source of all thy faith, thy love, thy hope, thy strength; then thou art becoming holy, though thou knowest it not. People take knowledge of thee that thou hast been with Jesus, and hast learned of him; and it is a strange and contradictory tale that thou sometimes dost tell, though thou thinkest that thou knowest thyself better than any one else can do. “Saints in Christ Jesus” is the description that the apostle gives of those to whom he sends this salutation. They are growing every day away from the world, and turning towards God in their aspirations and desires. This is the first thing that our text contains.

2. Now, secondly, I think it contains something about the *Democracy of the Christian Church*. “Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.” Our Lord Jesus Christ established a society of *those who believed in him upon the earth, and that society is still*

recognized in visible signs, and still influential through personal example and living. I love to think that there are many belonging to Christ in the Church who yet have not joined themselves to any body of believers. It is a bad thing to stand outside in that way, waiting for a perfect Church. Brother, thou wilt never find it; and if thou shouldst find it, and be admitted to it, it would, from that day, be an imperfect Church, for thou art full of imperfections. It will not do to imitate Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea in their hesitancy. Remember how true Nicodemus was at the last, and how faithful Joseph was before Pilate when he begged the bruised body. It is better to follow them in the maturer part of their experience. This Church, to which faith in the Lord Jesus Christ admits thee, is the great Church of the saved. It is not a monarchy, as Rome has tried to make it. It is not an oligarchy. It is not ruled by a few in the great company of believers. It is a pure, true republic, and was so designed by the Lord himself. Before the law this great community of believers are equal, and the ministry appointed within its bounds is mutual in all consecration and helpfulness. True, it has the purest characteristic of a theocracy—God governs it. The Church is subject to Jesus Christ; but his will is exerted over individuals according to their own voluntary actions. There are people who talk much about the early Church. I love to go back to the earliest Church of all. It may be that the early Church was taken up with superstition, and lost its simplicity by the accretion of errors; but the earliest Church of the apostles continued together in prayer and the Lord, and had all things in common. They were, in their ministry, each for the Church, and in their personal relationship to their Lord, members of a great spiritual democracy. “Every believer is in Christ Jesus” is the way in which the apostle puts this thought. Their merit is in common. It is a merit not to be increased, not to be diminished. Nothing that we can do in the development of personal character can increase the store of our merit before God; nothing that the believer is tempted into, by the subtlety of the sin that dwelleth

in him, takes from the fulness of that merit which is laid up for him in Christ Jesus. It is an inheritance in the unchanging Christ that is given unto us, and so, before the law of God, each is justified as freely as every other. That disciple who has just come to Christ is as absolutely accepted of God as he who has borne the burden and the heat of the day in a long, toilsome service for Jesus. The Father's love recognizes him in the well-beloved Son, and he is gathered as close to the heart of God as the oldest member of the family. Yea, the mansion in the Father's house is as ready for him as for those who in perfect holiness are now tuning their harps in sweet songs to their Redeemer's praise. His personal enjoyment of the things of Jesus, his personal influence and the expression of his life in the world, may be very different from that of every other disciple; it may be up, or it may be down; he may have a large ministry, or a very contracted one; but it is a difference which does not affect his title to all that God is to him in Christ, and all that God has promised to give to them who are themselves true to Christ.

But the believers who are thus described in common have their purposes coincident; together, in their dissimilar ways, they are working out the common salvation. Now, that was a grand motto which one of the schools accepted as their sign: "To the greater glory of God." But it is not the motto of a party or a school—it belongs to every true believer who intelligently has entered the company of those who claim the merit and confess the name of Christ. To this, dear brethren, we all stand committed. It is ours to strive to do the will of our Father, even as it is done in heaven. Every selfish consideration of our own comfort or advantage, everything which belongs personally to us or is limited to our own aggrandizement, must be subordinated. All the powers and the possessions of the believer are held subject to this one object, to this one principle of consecration to the glory of the Saviour.

3. But beyond all this comes to us the *Salutation and the Charge*. Here is a description of the believer. Here is a

description of his relations to every other believer. And now as to the result unto each one of us who are in such a company and in such a case: "Salute every saint in Christ Jesus," let me add a word of exhortation.

"Salute every saint." First of all, recognize every saint. There are no lines of demarcation between saints. We are learning, some of us, not to expect all saints to speak their creed in just the words that we employ. Theological differences are very often fictitious. If a man be in Christ, and claims all that Christ is and has promised to be, he is my brother, whether he call himself Roman, Greek, Armenian, Catholic, Ritualist, High Church, Broad Church, or Low Church, or by whatever name he may be styled in any other company. Let us look over our old theological differences, and try to recognise the eyes of brethren who are not able to speak to us our Shibboleth. Neither are ecclesiastical lines to be drawn between saints. What matters it whether the saint has been baptized in the river Jordan, or been sprinkled with a few drops on his forehead? What matters it whether one man's hand or another man's hand has been laid on the head of him who has been led to Christ? What matters it whether he calls himself by one designation or another in the army of the saved ones, so far as our personal recognition of him is concerned? There are advantages in all disciplines for different sorts of temperaments. God puts you in the church for which you are really prepared. But never let ecclesiastical lines, brother, divide you from the saints that are in Christ Jesus. Even so, in God's honour, one man chooses to wear one style of livery, one mode of living, one scheme of worship. Shall I, therefore, stand aloof from him and say, "I will not salute you"? Nay; God bless everybody who worships in any way. There is too little worship in the world now-a-days. It is better to have a worship that is dark, that is gloomy, that comprehends not the work of the Spirit in the soul, than to have no worship at all. And if a man is in Christ Jesus, he will give expression to his gratitude for benefits received, and his faith in promises yet unfulfilled.

But let not selfish ends divide saints. It is very easy for people in the pulpits to talk of theology and ecclesiastical rules, and then come down and despise God's poor ones. Oh, how pertinent is the epistle of James to the present time! The man with the scant raiment is too often scorned because the man with the gold ring is come into the concourse of God's people. Let it not be so with you, dear friends. Look at the saint part of everybody. Look not so much at their names, at their qualities, at their place in society, who their friends are; but when you look out in the world, seek the saint part of those with whom you come in contact. There may be those who are poor in this world's goods that may be the almoners of great spiritual riches to some of you that men call wealthy. They can tell you of God's goodness; they can speak of God's mercies in the midst of your self-sufficiency and self-conceit. Do not despise those who are saints because for a little while they are poor in the things that are seen, or they are outcasts in the reputation which lasts only for a lifetime. Ask whether a man is rooted and grounded in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is enough, whatever else may be defective in his profession. Use the language of love towards such persons. What business, in the Church of God, upon the tongues of professing Christians, have jealousy, bitter recriminations, and unkind criticism? Oh! remember the words of the Master, "Bless, and curse not." Speak as well as you can for every saint; and when you cannot speak well of a saint, keep quiet. It is a bad business in this world for saints to be tearing saints in pieces: we are not sent to be the judges of one another. An old artist taught us that lesson when he was trying to draw the picture of a friend who had a tumor on the side of his face—he painted the other side; and it is a blessed thing when we are making the most of the good in one another. And I want those of you who have much to confess in the other way to confess it down on your knees to-night, and henceforth be in fervent love—love that will burn up differences—love that will consume the rubbish that defiles our actions, that will sanctify *the sacrifices and the consecrations of our daily life.*

Let your salutation culminate in mutual help. Be ready with the word of counsel and of cheer. Provoke one another unto good works. Let the churches learn this lesson. There is no need of criticism or confession. I sometimes have this dream: if one could divide the whole heathen world among the companies of those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, and each could take the nation for which he is most adapted by its system and its traditions, how soon would heathendom become Christ's dominion! But now, instead of provoking to good works, how do professing labourers for Christ often weaken and sometimes nullify each the other's usefulness, by a multiplication of agencies in fields too poor to sustain them; and this from no other motive than the failure to recognize the necessary community of interests of all true saints in Christ Jesus.

Dear friends, our text is a plain message, containing a very important truth. Oh! that we might each have a loving influence and a purpose to do kind and generous acts, each to the other. Let us renew an incident of the old Church to-night. Fancy yourselves among Ephesian Christians. Remember that aged apostle whose Patmos days had past, and who waited for his welcome home. Look, the Apostle of Love is even now borne into the congregation of the faithful upon the arms of true disciples. Watch the loving smile, like unto that of the Lord, which plays about his half-open lips. He speaks. Be still, that you may catch his words: "Little children, love one another."

THE DUTY OF IMPROVING THE MEANS OF GRACE.

BY REV. W. H. H. MURRAY, BOSTON.

"Looking diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God."—HEB. xii. 15.

THIS passage, in its original application, refers especially to the converted, but may with equal clearness and pungency be addressed to all who stand in moral relations to God. I shall consider it in its widest significance, and make it a basis and starting-point from which I shall urge upon all of you, and especially such of you as have not as yet a hope in Christ, the duty of leaving nothing undone whereby the hope may be obtained. I feel that many of you are peculiarly situated. You are in that border-land which lies between worldliness and spirituality, in doubt whether to advance or go back. You are not as bad as you have been, nor as good as you should be; and I wish to call your attention to certain considerations why you should not remain where you are. I hope to make it appear to some of you that you should go on until you have come to a full and perfect Christian state.

1. There is a certain class of men who come to the surface, and advertise themselves in every revival period; who say, "Why need I go to a prayer-meeting? Can't I read my Bible, and feel my guilt, and ask for pardon, just as well at home as in the vestry of the church? The one place is just the same as the other." And in this way they put aside kindly-meant invitation and solicitude in their behalf.

Now, I desire to say a few words to you in this congregation who belong to this class, and to that greater number outside of this audience to whom, in the providence of God, these words

may come, who use the same excuse to stave off the Christian importunity of those who are anxious in respect to the welfare of your souls. Does it not seem, at times, queer to you, that people who are too sensible for you to imagine insane, should be more anxious about your welfare than you are yourselves?

Now, then, I ask you, friend, if the prayer-meeting is the same as your home, why do you refuse so persistently to go to it? Why do you so dislike the place of confession and prayer and exhortation? Why do you dodge and avoid a place which is the same as your home? Why do you put ingenuity upon the rack to invent excuses for not going? What is the cause of that uncasiness which disturbs you as the prayer-meeting night draws near? Why do you dislike to have your wife or mother or sister or friend ask if you will not go to meeting with her to-night?

My friend, do not deceive yourself; do not flatter yourself that you can deceive God's people. They have all passed through the same shameful and bitter experience. They all avoided the Spirit once, and strove to stop their ears to the invitation of peace, as you are now doing. They all resisted the means of grace, and came out of the power and dominion of sin tardily, and only as pushed along by the strong-handed mercy of Christ. We all know your feelings, therefore; for they have been our own. We know, for our eyes have been opened so that we see, the cause and motive of your disinclination. You do not desire to go to the prayer-meeting, because it is a prayer meeting. You know and feel that there is a difference between that room of prayer and your own house, and that is why you stay at your own house. Why not be honest (pardon me if I seem to rudely impeach your motives)—why not be honest, I repeat, and frankly say, "I dare not go to the prayer meeting: the tide sets all one way there; and, if I should put myself into it, I should be borne along, and compelled, as it were, to become a Christian; and I am not ready to become a Christian yet"? I do not say that you shall go to the place of prayer; I do not say that you shall be converted: you are master of

your own movements. I would not place the weight of a finger upon the sceptre of your independence. What the Spirit may not do, it is not for man to attempt; but I do insist that you shall deal honestly with the Holy Ghost. You can say, "No, I won't be converted," if you will; but I insist that you shall say it directly to his face, and in just so many words.

Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel so as to uncover all your excuses, so as to reveal the wickedness of the crouching motive that fears to show itself, and cause every act of your mind to stand forth, perceived of yourself and others, in the clear light of a deliberation intelligent and decided as it is wicked!

In further explanation and enforcement of this point (for some of you may not realize the reason and philosophy of the means of grace) I suggest,—

2. That the mind is subject to motives. Every decision has a parental cause back of it. Every resolution is in the line of sequence. Something has preceded. It had a bulbous state before it flowered out. The mind decides from the same reason that a stone mounts into the air: it is impelled upward to the point of decision by a power acting underneath it. No man becomes a Christian, no person changes the order of his life for the better, because compelled by the arbitrary exercise of God's power. God deals with souls very like as he deals with flowers. He puts a pressure, but no violence upon them. His touch is the touch of gentleness. He comes to a tree, and sifts his dew all over it. He does this night after night, until every bud is moist, and a half disposition to yield has come to the hard edges of the outer leaves. Then come the rays of the sun with their sweet enticements—a lover for every bud—and they say, each to his own, "Open unto me, my beloved, my undefiled." And after a little time of delay, as if every flower would be true to the modesty of nature, they all open; and the orchard is bright with the beauty of their faces, and rich with the fragrance of their breath. And it is just so in the kingdom of grace. *While God puts no violence, he does put a pressure upon its*

subjects, strong as it is sweet. We are not compelled, we are inclined; we are not dragged, we are enticed; we are not driven, we are persuaded; and there are times and places when and where these gracious influences are felt more strongly than at others. There is a spot on my farm—a hillside, with a southern exposure—where I shall plant my orchard and my berries and my flowers, because the sun greets it with its earliest ray, and lights it with its retiring beam. And I hope some day to sit in my porch, and have the mingling perfumes of all that slope borne up on the current of the warm south to my nostrils. And so in the wide ranges of God's husbandry, where are soils and climate for every possible virtue, there are favourable localities and southern exposures to the spirit, where everything blossoms earliest in youth, and where the Indian summer of Christian experience lingers longest in the changeful atmosphere. And this law is no more peculiar to the realm of the soul than to the realm of the mind. Why should a child attend school? Why build colleges? Why collect libraries? Why group the paintings and models of the great artists of the world? Why cannot your child be as well taught, why cannot his judgment in matters of art become as discriminating, his taste as refined, at home, as in these places so ostentatiously set apart for his service? Because, I respond (and you all anticipate the answer), because a man is influenced by his surroundings. There is an influence in association, an inspiration in occasion, a power obtained by the collocation and concentration of means and agencies, which the dullest in apprehension must see and acknowledge. The college is dedicated to learning; its walls were reared in the interest of culture; its associations are all classic; and the atmosphere of the place, as we say, is literary. These things are not without their influence upon the student's mind. They quicken and stimulate his ambition; they sustain his noblest aspiration; and in after-years, as he looks backward to his college-days, he discovers that more potent and blessed upon him than all the positive accretions of knowledge was this silent, subtle influence born of the surroundings and spirit of the place.

So it is, friends, with the sanctuary and room of prayer. You who would put yourselves in the best position for spiritual development, make your regular visitations to each; if you would have knowledge of your sins, go where that knowledge is imparted; if your conscience is dead and inoperant, go where it may be brought in connection with the Spirit, and shocked into life; if you are hardened in your unbelief, and would be melted, go where tears are flowing, and the choked and tremulous voice of confession is heard: in short, if you desire to be saved, go where salvation is being proclaimed and experienced.

You are walking in darkness: let the hand of a friend lead you to some room that is full of light. You are like a man smitten with leprosy; it has full possession of you; it has attacked the nerves, and taken away your sense of feeling; it has hardened the organ of sight, so that you are blind. You neither feel nor see in what wretchedness and loathsomeness you stand; and you will not believe such as tell you, with tears in their eyes, weeping because of the wretched plight you are in, how terrible is your condition. Go, then, to him at the touch of whose finger the scales shall fall from your eyes, and you shall see how vile you are; and not alone that, but looking again, see your vileness pass away, and you yourself—too happy to laugh, your joy finding expression in your tears—feel that you are standing a new man in Christ Jesus.

I desire all of you to whom I am a religious teacher and adviser to understand that the matter of personal goodness is not one of mere preference—something you can accept or reject as you please. There is a right and a wrong to it. Now, I feel that all of you desire, on the whole, to do what is right. The spirit of enlightenment, the spirit of quickening, has been with you; and you are not insensible to obligation. It has not had its perfect work in you; for you have resisted it in part, and do still resist. But, so far as you have permitted, it has been with and in you, and kept you from fatal indifference. You have been like the briars and brambles in *spring-time*, whose nature it is to go out in the way of thorns,

and yet from which God, through sun and shower, elicits sweetness. You have been shone upon of his love; you have been nourished by the dews of his grace; and a certain floral state and fragrance have come to you, in spite of yourselves, as it were. And it should be a matter of keen gratitude with you, as it is of rejoicing to us all, that he has not left you to yourselves, but enticed you by a sweet persistency toward goodness. He has blessed you, as he often does all his children, beyond what they expected—beyond what they consciously desired.

Now, I speak to you as those who are able to realize an obligation; and I say (and I think that you all will agree with me) that you have no right to remain spiritually where you are, if any advance is possible to you. If you would be a better father or mother, or wife or husband, or brother or sister, or friend, by becoming a Christian, then you ought to become such to-day. The question of experience and conduct is not one that is important to you alone. It affects every one whom you affect—all your clerks, your relatives, your acquaintances, and community at large. The character of a man's life affects thousands beside himself. Wickedness cannot be kept inside a man's own heart. You might as well expect a poisonous flower to keep its poison to itself, when the wind goes over it and wafts its deadly perfume abroad, as to expect to keep the evil thought and wicked imagination and inordinate desire to yourself. There is a social and moral atmosphere; and men breathe of your impurity, and are endangered by it. My voice, therefore, only gives utterance to the solemn protest of universal purity against your past and present conduct, when I urge you to become better men and purer women. The embodied virtue of the world speaks through me, exhorting and entreating you to rectify your nature and your courses. I speak not alone for the adults: I speak for those who sleep in cradles to-day, who are to grow up and be influenced by the evil in the world, of which your imperfection and sinfulness compose a part. Steep and flinty enough by Nature's dire appointment will be the path their tender feet must tread: place not a pebble, plant not a

thorn, in their path. If we are anxious for your conversion, it is because we are interested in it as sharers of its influence. If we labour so strenuously to lift you, it is, in part, because we feel that, without you, we ourselves cannot so rapidly mount.

I dare to say that few of you are indifferent to your spiritual condition. You are thoughtful, solemnly so, for the Spirit of God has descended upon you as winds come down upon a forest; and as the trees are swayed, so you are moved and agitated in your minds. And you can truly say, "I am thinking upon this matter a great deal. I think of it every hour in the day; yes, and at night too: when my family think I am sleeping, I lie awake, pondering my spiritual condition." I understand all this, friends; and yet I say frankly to you, that in this lies your greatest peril. I mistrust this prolonged deliberation. My fear is (and I ask you to judge if it be groundless)—my fear is, that you will do nothing but think. Thinking will never save you; it will never fulfil the gospel requirement; it will never make your peace with Jesus; it does not commit you to that step which is alone satisfactory to God, and which you must take or ever his peace will be shed abroad in your hearts. You can bury a seed so deeply in the earth, you can retain it there so long, that it shall decay. The germinal principle in it shall be extinguished, and no life ever come out of it. And so a resolution, no matter how noble, no matter how promising, can be detained so long in the mind as to die out, and never develop into an act; and I fear that this sad experience will be yours. There is a time for debate—a time when to act would be only to blunder ignorantly; but, on the other hand, there is a time, there are seasons, in every one's life, when to debate longer is to sin—a moment when action alone, prompt and decided action, meets the emergency and fulfils obligation. Do you understand this, friends? Does this analysis come with the force of conviction to you? Does something within you say, "That's my case"? If so, how, then, can you delay? how hesitate? If so, you are at the very door of opportunity: you have but to open it; you have but to take one step, and you stand in your

Father's presence, with the light of his face shining upon you, and his love covering your transgressions like a mantle. Would that I might have a more impressive utterance than the feebleness and coldness of uninspired speech! Would that for one moment—yea, even now and here, to-day—the “gift of tongues” might be vouchsafed to me, that through my lips might come to you the perfect expression of the highest wisdom! Then should you be exhorted; then should there be a propulsion to my words that should push you on; then should it seem, to you who hesitate, no longer the voice of man, but in very truth the voice of God. Then should mercy stand revealed before you—not that mercy which is known of men, and whose home is on the earth, but that sweet, that tender, that sublime expression of Jehovah known to the redeemed and pardoned, whose dwelling-place is heaven, and whose home is in the bosom of God; and you should see it standing here, lacking not voice of warning, lacking not gesture of entreaty, saying unto you in tones to thrill and melt your hearts, “Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

I know that now and then, when every other excuse fails him; when Satan can push forward no other defence to a man's wickedness; as the last desperate resort against the Spirit, he concentrates the energies of the mind in one bald expression of unbelief and obstinacy, and the man says in his heart, “It isn't true. The preacher is mistaken. I am in no such peril as he describes, do what I may. God is too good to condemn me.”

My friends, palsied for ever be my tongue in that hour when it shall cease to magnify the goodness of God! My conception of him, like a sun full-orbed and replendent, rides for ever the heaven of my hope; and whether in gladness, or dimmed with the moisture of many tears, I lift my eyes upward, the sky is bright with the outshining of his love. Neither in father nor mother, neither in friend nor lover, can man find a measure for his benevolence. Never may you find a charity, never a patience, never a compassion like to his. But this makes not

your error the less, nor your conclusion less wrong and perilous. Listen, then, while I strive to make this appear to you.

1. In one sense God does not condemn you—you condemn yourself. Not by the frown of his face shall you be exiled from heaven and him, which terms are one; your own condition shall banish you; your own consciousness of unfitness shall banish you. Though you stood in the streets of heaven, yet should you say, “This place is not for me; my companions are not here;” and, covering your face with the mantle of your remorse, you would fly from the place and companionship you did not deserve, neither were fitted to enjoy. The wretch who stands at night on the corner of your street, clothed in rags, and every rag defiled with dirt, with bloated face and bloodshot eyes, and a tongue familiar with oaths, is not less fitted for the light and refinement and purity of your parlours than you are—standing in your sins, clothed in the garments of your unrighteousness, your minds corrupted with the out-going of many unseemly imaginations, your habits all earthly—for the clear light of heaven and the company of the blessed. Never shall you know until that hour noted chiefly for the two revelations it shall make—one of the purity of God, the other the impurity of man—never until you shall stand, I say, in that pure light which forbids all illusions, and compels, by its clearness, a full knowledge of yourself, will you know how wicked you are. Then shall you indeed see your unfitness; then will you realize, as no words of mine can make you, the need of the new birth. The silence of God will be the voice of your condemnation, and your own consciousness indorse, even with groanings, the righteousness of the decree.

But, were this not so, still are you in the wrong. The Adversary perverts your theology that he may still hold you as his captive; for you surely cannot deny that God is ruler over a kingdom filled with two classes of subjects, the good and the bad, the obedient and the disobedient. In this world, as you know, wickedness and wicked men exist, and hence law is a necessity; and, in order that it may protect the good, it must

be enforced ; for law unenforced is both a standing dishonour to the law-making power, and a laughing-stock to the wicked. And God must, therefore, enforce his laws against every transgressor of them, and the impartial enforcement of the law becomes the highest evidence of his goodness. Go down to one of your city courts and test this reasoning. You are interested in this matter, for you are a citizen here, and your own life and property are at stake. In one court-room you find a weak man as a judge—not a base judge, perhaps : not one who will pocket a bribe ; but one in whom there is no keen sense of justice, no judicial uprightness, no proper realization of his responsibility. The case before the court is one of your own bringing. A man has broken into your store, and robbed you ; or into your house, and violated your wife ; and the whole community has risen up in arms against the man. A feeling of insecurity has spread all over the city, and men say, as they meet in the street, “ Who of us is safe ? There was a time once in this city when a man could leave his family under the protection of the public law, and journey off, and do his business abroad, feeling that his wife and children were secure ; but now it seems that none of us are secure. What a civilization is this, when a man must needs be at home every night, pistol in hand, to defend his own dwelling ! ” And they say, “ This villain must be made an example of, or law will be only a name here, and a by-word among thieves. ” But the judge is one of your tender, merciful, good men, too kind-hearted to punish any one—just such a being as some of your teachers picture God to be ; and he says, “ I can’t punish this man ; I love him. I dare say he will repent if I let him go. ” And so he bids the sheriff unclasp the handcuffs, and turns the man loose upon society again. Friends, what would you say of such a judge ? I am not talking theology to you ; I am not striving to convert you to any set of doctrines : I am talking common sense ; I am getting you down to the very roots of the principle of public justice ; and I ask you, What would you men say of such a judge ? Would you call him a good judge ?—a judge to be honoured ?—a judge to be loved and

kept in office? No! You would say, "This is a wicked judge: he is worse than the criminal he wickedly pardoned. If he had been a good judge, he would have interpreted the law to the man's condemnation and our safety. His goodness would have at least made him just. Away with him from the bench he disgraces, and the city, every home in which he has imperilled!"

My friends, are goodness and justice one thing above, and another below, the sky? or are they the same in every world and order of beings throughout the universe of God? You say, "They are one and the same everywhere and unto all." Then I say, in accordance with your own rendering, the very goodness of God will impel him to execute his law against every transgressor, unless some other provision than such as the principles of public justice provide shall be made in the criminal's behalf. A provision has been made, blessed be God! The terms and conditions thereof I have presented to you out of the Scriptures before, and do present them to-day, which you have rejected, and do now, as I understand you, reject; and these, being rejected, leave you as though no provision had ever been made. Where, then, do you stand? You stand in the position of transgressors before the law, unprotected by any provision of mercy, with the just and the good of all ages and of every world indignant at you on account of your crime; without God, and without hope in the world. Your present is dark with forebodings, as a landscape upon which has fallen the shadow of coming storm; and out of the future comes the muttering of concealed but approaching thunder. Fly, then, impenitent man, before the night of death comes, and the storm of judgment breaks above you!—fly to the Rock that is higher than thou!

The death of Christ, I charge you to remember, and to believe none who say otherwise, as you value your soul,—the death of Christ was the extreme suggestion of infinite mercy, whereby judgment might not be pronounced upon the criminal, and the honour of the law and the security of the universe at the same time be sustained. There are no unrevealed fountains, friends

lying back of Calvary, yet to be opened, in which the guilty may wash and be cleansed. There is no rock out of which waters may gush, from which creatures dying of thirst may drink, save that which was smitten by a greater than Moses. There is no other name in heaven, or among men, whereby you can be saved, than the name (is there no note of music that I can borrow in which to breathe this name?—a name that should have melody for its expression, and the harmony of heaven for its praise), the name of my Redeemer and my Lord. Come, then, to God, with this name upon your lips. Come in your hesitation, come in your trembling, come in your guilt, come even in your despair, and ask freely; for it is written, “Whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, that will he give unto you.”

And now, friends and strangers, as I draw to the conclusion, I strive after some parting utterance that shall fitly express the solemnity of this hour. I have striven to speak with the simplicity and directness of a man who realizes the grave consequences of human conduct. Ahead of us all is the future; and to us, who are gifted with immortality, it is an endless future. I know that time will fail; that the days will die, and have an end; that the earth will cease its revolutions; and the seasons, because of their age, expire: but we shall not fail, and the souls that are within us will not cease to live. The earth on which we are, and the heavens above us, will pass; but we shall not pass. Even the bodies we inhabit will return to their native elements; ashes shall be mingled with ashes, and dust with dust: but we, like birds that fly upward and abroad when the bars of their cages part, shall stand unharmed when our bodies dissolve, and our existence will be continual. Sitting as you are under the shadow of that eternity which looms in vast projection above your heads, feeling as I do that some of you may be near your graves and the supreme crisis of your lives, I ask you to tell me what is your spiritual position. Upon what are you settled? What hope have you to give strength and consolation in your dying hour? I press

you with no arguments ; I make no appeal. Faculties and powers are yours sufficient for the investigation, ample for decision. If you have not decided ; if you still linger in a state of hesitation, of dangerous lethargy, or wicked indifference,—I do my duty in warning you against further delay. Avoid it as your deadliest foe. Your consciences speak through my voice, and re-echo my admonition. Sink the line of investigation into the waters to-day. Touch bottom somewhere. Drift no longer on an unsounded current down which so many before you have floated to ruin, and the shores of which are lined with the upheaved fragments of many and recent wrecks.

The day has brought you a new and beautiful possibility. It has delivered you from your business and your daily cares. It has graciously separated you from those worldly pursuits which forbid the leisure needed for solemn thought. It has introduced you to scenes peculiarly favourable to religious reflection. Its memories and its emotions throng to your aid. Heaven itself descending in the privileges of this closing moment, opens its gates for your entrance ; and the solicitude of its saints and its angels, yes, and the desire of the Saviour himself, speaking through my lips, sends out the solemn interrogation, “ Will you enter ? ”

Suspend your answer until you hear me. By that past behind you, by its sacred memories, by the graves where your pious ancestry sleep, by the remembrance of faces now passed into glory, by the bitter recollections of your sins from which you can never deliver yourselves, by the brevity of your lives hastening to their close, by your fear of death, by your hope of heaven, and by whatever other invocation unknown to me, and which, by being uttered might influence you for good, I entreat you, one and all, to drop your rebellion against God, and be at peace with him. The moment is heavy with the burden of your decision. Have you decided ? If so, how ?

GOD'S GLORY IN THE SOUL.

BY REV. STEPHEN H. TYNG, JUN.

"They glorified God in me."—GALATIANS i. 24.

THROUGH long ages the same sun has been shining. Whatever be the secret of its hidden fires, its light is as bright to-day as when it greeted the first man, and its radiance was no less then than now. Planets of our system have caught its glory, and reflected its beauty and its power. Earth has, through these thousands of years, basked in the smile of its beams. Even to the verge of other systems like our own, afar off in infinite space, has its swift light shone and been lost in the depth of darkness beyond. Eclipses have at times hidden the sun from our view; but the shadow has passed away quickly, and the clear light shone again. Fogs and vapours have ascended from the surface of the earth and dimmed its glory; but these have been scattered by the sun himself, who cometh forth with health in his wings. Night has come, as the world has turned away its face from the sun; but day has succeeded night in the ceaseless revolution of our homes. So, century after century, generation to generation, year upon year, day by day, childhood has clapped its hands, maturity has timed its toils, age has been cheered, with the glistening of the same steadfast sun. Its light and heat in interwoven rays have been absorbed by the cold earth, have been reflected from the placid lake, have been refracted in the depths of the water, have been radiated from all the forms of God's and men's combined creation. But still the same sun has been whispered in every evening breeze from the land, and in every morning's message

from over the sea. To the spectrum of its light not one line can ever be added; to its glory, so perfect, science cannot contribute a single beam.

This is God's symbol of himself in this lower world. He is the Father of Lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Life turns away from God, and men are in darkness. Life turns towards God, and it is full of cheer and joy and light. In his light we see light. Far removed from man, he yet reaches down to the humblest condition of the race. His rays are himself, and tell the story of their home afar. Through all disciplines, through all dispensations, by divers images, has this same God illuminated and cheered the world and the Church. Angels about the throne—redeemed saints, ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands in number, and sinners all over this world saved by grace, do glorify God, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. The God whose glory is in the heavens, revealed in the history of earth, and declared by the experience of every sincere and trusting soul, has perfections impossible of addition as they are evasive of all analysis. He is the standard of holiness, the source of life, the saviour from wrong. His glory belongeth unto him; he will not give it to another; yet every soul, every life, every home, every church, dwelling in the brightness of the beauty of God, declares, extends, exalts his glory. Before the eye and in the ear of rational creatures, theology cannot make God either more or less than he is. The panegyric does not add one virtue to the person about whom it is told; the picture that is true cannot make the portrait more beautiful than the face; the window, translucent, does not create, but lets in the light; even so our relation to God in his glory. It belongs unto us to *declare*—it does not belong unto us either to diminish or increase the majesty of God. All our consecration cannot add one ray, all our scorning cannot detract aught from him.

This is the sense in which God was glorified by Paul—the churches of Judea being witness. They rejoiced in the testi-

mony given to his converted life by his deeds, his sufferings, his courage, as they were manifest to all men. Those of you who have read attentively this letter to the Galatians will remember that it was suggested by the doubts that false teachers had raised among the faithful friends of Paul in reference to his own mission and the gospel that he preached. Their complaint was that he had not seen any of the apostles. His was not the doctrine of the Church. He was least and last of the apostles, and had had no time for education. Therefore, in denying the binding force of the ceremonial law upon the Gentiles, he erred from the truth as held by all the churches. And the answer of the apostle is in this first chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians. He is an apostle, not of men, neither by men, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. He tells the story of his early converted life. He went into Arabia; he conferred not with flesh and blood, yet he did spend some time with Peter, and was brought into communion with James, the Lord's brother. Yet this was nothing, for he made the whole of his Gospel to rest upon the revelation he had received from Christ himself. It was high ground to take. But then he dwelt in Cilicia, and in all the churches of Syria he received acceptance. "I was unknown by face unto the churches of Judea which were in Christ: but they had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified God in me." His own asseveration of his Gospel is vindicated by the change it had wrought in himself.

Now there were peculiarities in Paul's conversion which, perhaps, have never been reproduced and never may be experienced again. But the principles of all conversions to God are the same. When true, they compel the churches to give testimony to God's glory—they silence every other praise save that of God.

My topic is the Glory of God in a Sinner's Conversion. Christmas angels sounded it over the plains—"Glory be to God on high"—as they heralded the redemption that should work such changes in life; and the angels this day rejoice over

each sinner that repenteth and returneth, and make merry in the Father's house. The Church catches up the strain, and gives praise to God, and the world is silenced in its cavils by the continued miracles of transforming grace.

I. IN THE ACT OF CONVERSION God is glorified. It is strange how many misapplications of this word "conversion" prevail in the world and the churches. It is used to express the change from one civilisation to another: the Chinaman is converted when he becomes an American. It is employed to tell the story of a change of philosophical thought, when one begins to believe in the existence of spirits after having all his days supposed that God had nothing in this universe like unto himself, but all was dead, inert matter. It is introduced, again, as the explanation of a person's change of ecclesiastical relations. One passes from your church into the church opposite to yours, and he is "converted," according to the usage of many. He has changed the mere form of his profession, whilst he holds to the same great essential truths. And, indeed, when one ceases to hold to the precepts of the gospel, and allies himself to the base and polluted crimes of Communism, their language is that he is "converted"—from purity to depravity. Yet not one nor all of these are here meant by the words in the sacred Scriptures. It tells the story of a divine impulse upon our affections, to turn them from the things they have loved before; upon our will, to entirely change the purposes and desires which have prevailed before; upon our life, to make perfect the contrast of that it had been theretofore. It is the impulse of God upon man, turning him away from the things that tempt him further from God unto the things that attract him into nearer associations and relationship. And every part of the act of conversion is divine. The only thing that you and I do, dear friends, in conversion, is to fight God, until, at last, his Spirit makes us willing in the day of his power.

This act of conversion includes several facts. *The Sense of Estrangement from God* is its first feature. Now you will admit that this is not a common experience among men. You do not

see many shadowed faces on the street; you do not know many lives darkened with doubt and fear; you do not read many records which are blackened with this awful pressure of alienation from God. A single look at men will refute any allegation that they are conscious of estrangement, of themselves and by themselves. Indeed, God is not in all their thoughts, except in a few of their Sunday thoughts; and their great desire is to be as free from thoughts of him as possible—a desire which springs from an alienation that is not recognized and realized. Still the fact remains—as plain a fact as any written in the skies or on the earth—God is; man is his enemy. Every effort of his natural heart is to defame, to degrade, to dethrone God. He will do it by his philosophy if he can. He will do it in his language, so far as he has influence. He will do it, at least, by his life, in the opposition of the divine command, and in submission to the spirit that God hates. Under the ministry of the Gospel a man commences to see that this fact is asserted. He does not realize it, but he hears it preached. Would to God the Word was preached more often nowadays! He sees it written in the lines of the Scripture, and his mind is arrested; he contemplates, he considers, he meditates upon it. “Does that refer to me? Does that describe my heart, my character, my life?” The constancy of such meditation is the work of the Holy Ghost upon that man, until, by the power of God, it becomes a settled conviction of his soul that there is a God with whom he now has, and must ever have, to do. He cannot laugh him out of remembrance, he cannot successfully fight him; he must recognise him, and he must in some way submit to him. And he realizes that God is the contrast of himself; that he is alienated, astray, opposed even to his partial conception of God. Now, all conversions begin here; and no power but that which is divine can make a man realize that great truth.

Instantly *the Desire for Reconciliation* springs up in the heart of him whom God is converting. Last summer we all complained of the drought; and those of us who had little gardens in which we took pride, watched the dry earth, saw the cracks

in the sod and the walks, and learned the illustration of David's words about the thirsty land—"My heart gaspeth as a thirsty land" (is his expression) "for God." The stag, heated in the chase, breaks through the reeds and rushes in its desire to reach the stream; it pants for water—"Even so panteth my soul for God," is David's expression of longing. And in the holy Scriptures a blessing is given unto those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness." Now, divested of all the imagery, what is this? A simple, sincere desire for reconciliation with God—the knowledge which we all have that there is a way of salvation keeps us from absolute dark despair. When we begin to realize our alienation from God, we know there is a door, and that we can knock at it when we will; we know there is a great plan of grace, and we can avail ourselves of it if we choose, therefore we are not driven to despair and death by our own hand in the remorse and confusion that follow. Read the records of remorse in heathen lands, where not even this general knowledge of the Gospel prevails, if you would measure the influence upon life of the most superficial information about the Gospel of God's grace. Now, he that thus has learned to desire searches the Word of God, and seeks to know what all this means; not for somebody else, not that he may write a book, but that he may refresh and sustain and save himself. This has God wrought. It is his doing. No human being can pump up such a desire out of his estranged heart. It is like the spring in the soil which God feeds from the clouds—it would run dry if he did not give the early and the latter rain and the morning and the evening dew. But now the new creature begins to show itself. The man was born again. He did not know the time; he did not comprehend the experience. He desires fellowship with the God that before he wanted to be away from as far as possible in the universe. If God was in heaven, then he did not want to be there; he would fly to the uttermost parts of the world, and yet be oppressed with the fear that he should meet even there the God that he dreaded and hated. Now he learns that it is the goodness of

God that he has not been consumed, that he has lived days and months and years by the forbearance and long-suffering of that glorious God whom he has despised and braved. He longs to be reconciled, to enjoy the experience of those about him who speak of God not with dark, gloomy frowns, but with sweet, cheerful smiles, and whose choicest word in all the vocabulary of earth is "Emmanuel, God with us." This is the Spirit of Heaven, and it must have come from Heaven.

But *the Invitation of Divine Love* meets such a man. The Gospel is no longer a stale story to him. He asks no other message. The more of it he can hear the better, for his soul feeds upon it, and is daily upbuilt by it. Oh, how eagerly he listens! I can always, in a congregation, point to men and women whose faces show that they are present on everlasting business—not mere casual hearers, but those whom God's Spirit has awakened to learn what be the principles of the Gospel of Christ. Never a prisoner so greeted the pardon that clemency sent; never an outcast so wept with gladness over the letter of recall to his father's house; never a pauper so read the will which brought home to him wealth immeasurable, as does such a man when the Spirit of God has begun within him the desire for reconciliation. He studies this Word of God, he will not take it at second hand, he wants to see for himself, and to contemplate it as his own. God speaks to his soul by the Spirit and by the human voice in most persuasive pleadings. It is a divine message, and he loves to have it ring the chimes of his affections: "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden; I will give you rest," and all the powers within him bow down and obey in adoring reverence before a Redeeming God who makes such a promise as that.

Now comes *the Determination to Return*. It may have occupied only minutes, but what a journey it is of soul! Some one may have taken the step to-night, and said, "Yes; I have been alienated. I do desire to be reconciled. The message is for me. I will arise and go to my Father." But remember how far you have *already gone* in your purpose and determination. You

have forsaken all. You have turned your back, now, in the decision of your soul, upon the things which before attracted your regard. Everything in the condition of such a deciding soul says, "Go." He thinks of himself in his unfallen condition, and it cries out, "Go." He looks at his life, so filled up with frivolity and temptation, and it says, "You are not too safe—go." He looks out into the future and its hopes, and all is dark; and a voice commands, "Go." And his remembrance of home—bread enough and to spare, yet he far from home; the family gathered together; invitation after invitation increases his impetuosity in the determination to be reconciled unto God. But the best of all is when the determination becomes an act. "He arose," it is said of the prodigal, "and returned." How more than hoped for is the welcome. Now acceptance from a Father's love. Now peace that passeth understanding. Now rest from all his heartaches as he trusts in Christ. Now joy which overflows his chalice as he brings it empty to the fountain. He gives God the glory, who hath rescued and reclaimed him, and brought him back to himself, to hope, to Heaven.

Dear friends, from the first sense of alienation to the actual affiancing of the returning soul, it is all of God; and we, looking at such a soul, say, in human eloquence, in the persuasion of friendship, in arguments or influences that men have used, Let God be glorified in every such experience; let every such life stand a monument to the sovereignty and the authority of divine grace.

II. But I want to speak, secondly, of the INFLUENCE OF CONVERSION. This is the glory of God. Both our conscious and unconscious influence as converted men and women is continually crying, "Let God be glorified." "Be Thou, O God, exalted above the heavens, and Thy glory above all the earth." If we live, let God be glorified; if we die, may that glorify God; if we suffer, let God be praised in our sufferings; if we labour, let it tend only to his glory; if we have plenty, let it overflow as a wave-offering, and be distributed to the necessities of his poor saints; if we be poor, we will still look to him

whose are the blessings of the basket and the store; if we have abundance, it is not permitted to us to glory; if we are debased, let him put us under his feet if he will, only let him be glorified. This is the expression of every converted life. The influence of Paul's conversion has a parallel in every experience: "They heard that he that persecuted in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed."

In this influence of a converted soul the first fact is *the Withdrawal from Dishonouring Associations*. "Conversion to God," says one of the old seventeenth century divines, "begins with aversion from sin." It opens itself to suspicion if it does not constrain such a course of life. Dishonesty in trade, untruthfulness of speech, coarseness of influence, debasement of example—these can never consist with the love of God in the soul of man. There is plenty of solid ground in the way towards heaven; there is no need to walk through the mud. The soul that is seeking safety at the last will strive to evade the things that soil its reputation. It is so in all lines of thought. Purity of purpose is to be withdrawn, in our imagination, in our profession, in our desires, in our intentions, from the things which dishonour God. That was a good rule which a mother gave her son as he came to this great city to seek his fortune: "My son, never do anything, never go anywhere, never think or say anything which will dishonour your mother." It was a charge that lived in that man's memory, and controlled many of his years. I met such an one not long since, who, though his mother had been dead and buried, lo, these many years, still talked with me, as he walked the streets, about the pressure upon his conscience of one promise he had given to his mother when he came to seek a life among business men in this community. And if for one who gave us birth, how rather for him who gave us being? If for my mother, then so much rather for my mother's God. What avails it that men pursue us with words as Shimei stoned David with his curses? What matters it whether they cast out our names for evil? What avails it if they curse and condemn us? Dear friends, he that stands by

God in Christ has very contemptuous thoughts about such people. It is only his compassion for souls that gives him patience to endure them. For us who are converted, aversion from sin is the doctrine wrought in us by God's Spirit. I know not how to give it to you better than in the testimony of an old soldier, who, when he was converted, was asked to define the act; and he said it was the same in kind and character as the order he received, when a new and raw recruit, from his drill sergeant. He told him—"Right about face!" Not "Right face," not "Left face," but "Right about face!" That tells the story of true conversion, in the withdrawal from dishonouring associations.

A second fact in this influence is *the Attachment of one's self to God's People*. "Let God be glorified," is the desire and the expression of the soul. Remember Ruth, how she pleaded with her mother-in-law: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." It was a good daughter's love in the day of her mother's calamity and darkness, and it is the language of every converted soul to the Church of God. Not the lash drives men into the Church, but the love of the Church should attract them. Let me be with those among whom the glory of God shines from the face of Jesus Christ, is the impulse and desire of every returning soul. Here is encouragement: here is help; here is hope. "But among all the churches, how am I to decide?" says one outside of them all. "I belong to no church. My father belonged to one, my mother to another; and I have been attending here and there in spots. How am I to decide?" Brother, let me tell you one test for a decision: join that church in which God is most glorified. Never join a church for the praise of a denomination, to decide the popularity of a minister, to swell the number of eulogists, to make people point with approval to a building. God forbid, God forbid any such unworthy misconstruction and misuses of a church called by the name of Jesus Christ. The church that

makes the most of God in Christ is the church for me, whether it have ritual or no ritual, whether it have organization or no organization. The true convert should join a church in which there are conversions; not now and then, not one a month, not a number at the end of a year; but in which men are constantly saying, "What shall I do to be saved?" and to which the Lord is adding daily of the saved. Where conversions are most numerous, and where conversions are most true, there is the place for new converts. Avoid all other churches, no matter what be their social or ecclesiastical attractions. Avoid them as you would the Church of Laodicea, which Christ says had a name to live, but was so offensive to him that he spewed it out of his mouth. God makes a line among churches as he does among Christians. "Let God be glorified," is the test; not man's philosophy and self-conceit.

But, beyond this, there is a *Ministry to which this influence impels him*. Tell me of one silent convert in all this Bible. You cannot find one. Instantly a disciple was brought to Jesus, he searched for his brother; as soon as a leper was cleansed of his disease, he went out to tell the story; and when the possessed was delivered, he instantly went all through Decapolis, telling what great things God had done for him. The church, scattered at the persecution, went everywhere, preaching Jesus; and even so should it be now. Our ministry tends to this representative glory of God. Our work is personal; it is by all means to save some. A work of example, that men may take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus; a work of conversation—that is, unfolding the Gospel of Christ; a work of love, in the persuasion of souls. The world and the Church join their voices of testimony when they see the contrast in such a consecrated life. That man, a year ago, thought about nothing except his business; his whole life was spent in barter; he was grinding out soul to accumulate possessions. Now his soul is attuned to the melody of heaven, and he is recognized in even the walks of trade as an angel of God in the simplicity and sincerity of his example, and in the word he speaks in season to

them that are weary. Be not deceived about this matter. There is not a concern of man from which you are freed. The church is not the place for the highest consecration. The cloister is not the scene of the purest devotion. When men carry their converted purposes to the glory of God, through all the intricacies and perplexities and twisted policies of trade, there is something in them. God hath wrought in such a man to make him a tower of usefulness and influence. We never shall get beyond the first answer of the Westminster Catechism, although an Episcopal clergyman testifies it: "The chief end of man is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever."

III. Now, lastly, I want to point out some ASPECTS OF GOD'S GLORY that converted lives do testify. God does it all, and it takes all that there is in God to do it. It is no light work.

Wherever you see a converted man, brother, there has been an Omnipresent God, there has been an Omniscient God, there has been the exercise of the Omnipotence of God. *Every natural perfection* of God is engaged in the conversion of a soul. Now, it is very difficult to conceive of God in our times of thought, still less in our times of devotion. The eye is made for taking in the things of beauty in this world; the reason is adapted to comprehend principles. But the eye cannot look at the full meridian sun, and the reason is blinded when it searches the depths of God's glory. Yet, when he manifests himself in the works of his hands; when he brings the soul out of darkness into light; when he transforms a backsliding infidel into a true and accepted and faithful child of his; we testify, "God has been here." The Arab was asked how he knew that there was a God; and he answered, "When I look out of my door in the morning, how do I know it was a man, and not a camel, that passed my tent?" We know him from the marks of his presence. A converted soul glorifies all the natural perfections of God.

The *moral attributes* are equally engaged in a soul's conversion. *Justice, mercy, love, fidelity, holiness*: all these are rays of his glory. Take that prism, to-morrow, and let the sun shine

through it, and you will see marvels. The white, pure light is divided into many colours. Even so this Gospel of God's grace analyzes the glory of God, and shows how justice and mercy have met together; how righteousness and peace have kissed each other. At Bethlehem I see God condescending; in Galilee I see God obeying; in Gethsemane I see God struggling and agonizing; on Golgotha I see God bowing his head in the substitution for man's sin. What glorious rays of beauty! But when, with Peter and James and John, we stand on Mount Hermon to view a transfigured Christ whose face did shine as the sun, we behold the glory of God in marvellous combination. Each ray may be contemplated in itself, but all blend in the glory of God a Saviour. All that each event of life testifies is there, and far, far more than the mind of man can ever conceive.

But then, more than that, *the covenant relations* of God are glorified. The converted man finds a Father—meets a Saviour—is welcomed by a Friend. Now, it is sometimes the experience of children in this world, who never go away from home, that they find their parents in a new and better sense than they had ever met them before. If they have doubted them; if they have been disobedient to them; if they have suspected them; and if, at length, the dark cloud between child and parent passes away, the little one comes with new confidence to bury his head in his father's bosom, or on his mother's neck, to say, "I never knew you until now; I never understood you till now. The love has been deep down in my heart, but now I have found my father, I know the one with whom I have so long been living." Even so is it here, dear friends. The converted man finds the Fatherhood of God, who has been his father in Jesus Christ, ever since he was born; realizes the Saviour-hood of God, who bought him with a price before his first returnings were ever experienced; and rests in the Friendship of God, who is his abiding, faithful supporter and strength. This is my subject—the Glory of God in the Conversion of a Soul.

Now, dear brother, let us bring it down to one single point. *Has any one glorified God on your behalf? If so, then you have*

begun to realize your alienation, to desire to be reconciled, to study the invitation of love, and to return unto a God who every hour is returning nearer unto you. Then you have separated yourself from dishonouring associations; then you long to connect yourself with the people that honour God; then your ministry is to build up the things that once you destroyed, and preach the faith that before you persecuted. If that be true of you, brother, then all that there is in God is come to you; the Omnipresent, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent God is working in your soul; then all the rays of love, and justice, and holiness of God, have come down to a focus upon you, to transform you into the likeness of the Father. Then you have found a Father who has loved you ever since you had life; you have learned about a Saviour who long, long ago paid the debt; and you are beginning to walk with a Friend who will never forsake and never forget you. O ye over whom so many tears have been shed by loving parents and friends who love the Lord, cease, cease to annoy and to defame; begin to glorify the God who longs to recover you. Yea, let that be our prayer—that sentence which we often repeat: “Let my light so shine before men that they may see my good works, and praise and glorify my Father which is in Heaven.”

THE CHURCH AND SOUL-LIFE.

By REV. THOMAS ARMITAGE, D.D.

"The Church of the Living God."—1 TIM. iii. 15.

I am to treat of the church as the promoter of soul-life among men who are already really regenerate. You will perceive at once that the theme is new, or comparatively new, as a subject of pulpit-discussion, and necessarily difficult to handle. It would be a comparatively easy task to descant upon the general composition and character of organized congregations of Gospel believers as the Scriptures portray them—it would be easy also to present the distinctions between those local bodies and the church universal, in earth and in heaven, together with their relations to each other—and it would be more easy still to show the relations of both to the truth, to men in general, and to God; for on all these points the Scriptures treat with considerable clearness and fulness. But when we come to examine the relations which an organic body of regenerate men, called a church, sustains to the development and perfection of soul-life in the individual men who compose that body, we tread upon ground which the oracles of God have not so strongly defined. There is something of the mystical in the theme at the best, and, at first-sight, we feel an impulse to dismiss the subject as altogether too dubious, and even fanciful, for practical profit. And yet the proposition is so carefully worded as really to cover the entire radical difference, in primary teaching, between the church of Rome and all Christian bodies who hold to the idea that the church is an association of regenerated men. So that it really covers the great ecclesiastical controversy of the last three hundred years. For our subject, you will mark, does not touch the origin, the creation of soul-life, but only its development and perfection. It assumes that the regenerate soul is

quicken before it comes within the pale of the church, that vitality has been enkindled by some force or power foreign to the church, and that the church acts some important part in maturing that vitality. Now the radical difference between the church of Rome and all others who call themselves Christians is subtly wrapt up in the denial of a part of this proposition. She claims that by her inherent virtue and vitality as a church she first gives life to men who are dead in trespasses and sins, that while they remain in her bosom she nourishes and keeps them alive, and that finally she saves them into everlasting life; whereas, the teaching of the Gospel, as we understand it, is, that direct divine agency through the truth, with or without the church, first quickens the souls of men, then that that same divine agency continues and consecrates this soul-life through the church. If we can substantiate this position, it will follow that the Church exerts a most potential influence upon the life of religion in the soul of the regenerate, and is something more than a mere conventional association; but if we cannot substantiate it, it will follow that the Sacramentalists have at least the advantage of logical consistency over the evangelical in their church theory, whatever may be said of their ecclesiastical fellowship. Let us proceed, then, to inquire whether or not the church sustains a developing and perfecting relation to the soul-life of its own numbers. I take the ground that it does sustain such a relation, and I argue this—

1. *From the general drift of divine revelation as to the influential position which the church sustains in the great redemptive economy.*

One of the grandest facts in the history of man is, that God has never taken one discoverable step, nor put forth one visible act, for his redemption, but through the church. This is true both of the primary and completed history of redemption. Not a priest was consecrated, not an altar was built, not a victim was appointed, not a bard touched his lyre, not a prophet raised his voice, and not a hope was cherished in the primary dispensation under the law, but through the church. When the

elaborated principles and purposes of redemption were fully enunciated in the finished acts of the Gospel, still God spoke and acted by the church. When he brought his "only begotten Son into the world," he was born in the church, and in fulfilling all righteousness he was inducted into all the duties and immunities of the church. His disciples were living scions of the same goodly fellowship. Not a miracle did he work, not a truth did he utter, not a pang did he endure, but for his church. And his servants were as their master in this matter. Every journey which they made, every insult which they received, every book which they penned, and every martyrdom which they welcomed, was for the church. Besides this, in carrying out human redemption to its practical results, he has always preserved the church in close sympathy with his design. He has required his children to perpetuate the existence of the church by becoming "fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of faith"—"to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he hath purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." From the beginning God required every regenerate man to stand up and avow himself in open sympathy with his great purpose of redeeming love, by publicly uniting with his church, and so the grand succession of ecclesiastical existence has been maintained, and God's redeeming purpose has been perpetually made known by the church, both to man on earth and to "principalities and powers in heavenly places." In this splendid passage the church is represented as the schoolmaster and interpreter who makes known to angels the manifold wisdom of God in redemption. Angelic groups cluster over Christian assemblies on earth to prosecute their minute and delicate investigations into their Maker's moral government. From all this, it is clear that the church is not a matter of trivial import in the world, but is one of the great moral forces in the universe. She is no less than

the subservient apparatus of redeeming love, the scaffolding which men and angels mount to pry into the secret architecture, and steal a thought from this stupendous temple. So that the church is not the arbitrary mandate of the servant, but is the authoritative institution of the Lord. In her appointment something more was intended than the fostering of kind saintly feelings and sympathies. His design obviously compassed the infinite ramifications of divine skill and the complex mechanisms of divine love. She was to form a sort of centre in Jehovah's boundless empire, the palace of the great King, from which he should sway the sceptre of moral administration in mercy and in peace. This is apparent from the fact that there is no appeal from the statutes which he enacts there, and that there is no code of moral legislation but that which he issues there. His willing children are bound to these enactments by ties which they would not loose, for the secret impulse which wins this docile allegiance to their King was first displayed in the purchase by his own blood of every member in the sacred brotherhood. It is "the church of the living God," which he hath "purchased with his own blood," and therefore while the church and the redemptive economy are

"Distinct as the billow,
They are one as the sea."

I argue that the church sustains a developing and perfecting relation to the soul-life of its own members—

2. *From the intimate relations which exist between her and "Christ our life."*

One of the most difficult points in this discussion will be to define, with anything like clearness and comprehensiveness, the specific union which binds Christ and his church together. Happily our text introduces us into the central idea of this unity by the use of the one word "*living*"—"The church of the *living* God." This fearful appellation of the Deity is used very seldom in the Scriptures, and never but upon occasions and subjects of very great importance. For instance, we find it in the deep

soul-struggle of David when he cries, "My soul thirsteth for God, the living God," indicating the most intense longings of an immortal soul after its original life-sources. Again, it is used in the supernatural revelation of Christ's divinity, made to Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the *living* God." Twice, and twice only, it is used in the apostolic epistles, to indicate the illustrious relation which Christ bears to his church. What is more remarkable is, that a qualifying adjective is never used in the epistles but twice, for the purpose of defining this relation, and in both cases the same word is used. She is called the "church of the *living* God." Now, we never read of the church as the church of the most high God," although we read of the "servants of the most high God." We never read of the church of the everlasting God, although we read of the "commandment of the everlasting God." We never read of the church of the holy God, although we read that the "Lord our God is holy:" nor of the church of the mighty God, although we read of Christ, that "his name shall be called the Mighty God." But when the inspired pen comes to give us the intricacies of his relations to the church this mystical language is invoked. She is coupled with him either as the church of the *living* God, the pillar and ground of the truth, or as Mount Zion, the city of the *living* God. Herein we discover the nice distinction which the Holy Spirit uses in gospel definition. The church is united to Christ, not as a dead bride, "for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living." She is allied to him, not as to a God of the imagination, but as to the Fountain of all vitality. She possesses him, not as the personated ideal life of God, but as the God of *life*—"the *living* God." Here, then, life throbs after life. It is difficult to prove any definite notion of the proper sense of this remarkable term. He who would appreciate the discriminating thought of the Holy Spirit must step past figures and symbols to seize the great elementary existence itself, and in order to do this there must be an unquenchable desire to feel its flow and its power. The law of sympathy intertwines here with the law of life, mass desiring to blend with mass, as

rain-drops blend into a deep. It seems to have been this law of sympathy which brought the apostle himself to the well-spring of perfect church existence when he made the discovery that the "living God" is the causation of all energy in the church. Anything less than this would make the church a dark, bleak, barren globe, to oscillate and roll through a firmament of boundless darkness without a ray from star or planet, instead of the radiant, living, vital body that sweeps around the central luminary of all being." To be sure, God is the cause of all causes, the life of all lives, the prolific original of every existence. He is not only the universal life, but the "living God" universal. In him all lives "live and move and have their being," from leviathan that lashes the ocean into fury, to the insect that imperceptibly wheels in the eddies of the air. But in the church there is an embodiment of every attribute and perfection of "the living God," which forms an inherent indwelling, and not a mere relation of influence. The life of his inferior creatures gives expression to his government, but the church gives expression to his personality, to all his moral nature, and you can see it nowhere else as you find it there. If she forms "the mountains round about Jerusalem," he is the broad day flooding every hill-top with light, inspiring them with his own life, and causing the intervening valleys to sing. God dwells in the midst of his church in tangible reality. The church can say, as no other body of men can say, "We are made partakers of the divine nature." Look at the natural sun: he is present in the vast spaces of the solar system, but he is present only in benign influence—essentially he is not present. "Daylight dawns, dispersing the gloomy shadows of night; warmth follows in its train, rousing, awakening, inspiring every living creature with a sensation of happiness; genial vernal and summer influences descend from his throne of glory, and ten thousand forms of life respond to his call. Forests bloom in rich and variegated foliage; cornfields present their waving beauties to the breeze; meadows, mountains, rivers, gardens, all put on their dress and stand forth, as on a gala day,

to present their homage of allegiance and their offerings of joy to their King. All living creatures participate in the general gladness; the melody of the songsters of the woods, the notes of browsing cattle, the frolics of young life in its vast varieties, the soft and gentle whispers of the summer's breeze, all conspire in one universal concert and chorus; and the whole is the fruit of one great central power, though existing at a distance, the sun in his glory." But that glory, after all, is but a glory of influence; the central power diffuses its influence to an indefinite extent, while the sun himself is not there. But when we speak of the living God as the soul-life of the church, we speak of him as personally present with her. Our Lord Jesus Christ, by the mysterious conjunction of his human nature with the divine, is present with his church in all the benefits of that human nature, wherever she may be. He gave his life for her once. And when he had taken back that life, he openly avowed the life-unity which between them was thenceforth inseparable. "Lo, I am with you to the end of the world." From that time his relation to humanity was essential, indissoluble, and immortal, and this makes his relation to his church an eternal vitality. It is the life unity of the branch to the vine—of the body to the head. I do not mean by this that the church is the body of Christ in the sense of diffused manhood, but in a relation of vital dependency. The head has entered into the holy place for us, but his body is with us in the outer court, and still beats with his mediatorial life, because of its indissoluble oneness with "the living God." True, that life is communicated to all the dependent parts of the body by an executive power—the Spirit of the living God; but in the hands of the executive himself it is not denied. He is the quickening fountain of all soul-life. He is ubiquitous both as to time and space, and is the mighty axis upon which all church life revolves. He is filled with its plenitude, and of him the church ever sings: "With thee is the fountain of life." That life is perpetually drawn forth to the church by threatened death—just as threatened death draws succour from the heart to the extremities of the

vine. The promise of Christ to the church was not only that when the Comforter should come he should be in them personally, but that he should "be with them" collectively: "he shall be with you, he shall abide with you for ever." This must mean that in all the perfections of his nature, he should dwell with the church in a life that is perfectly deathless. This must mean something more than the outward illuminating and application of precept and doctrine; and what can it mean but those irresistible forces and that moral life which have uniformly continued with the church from that day to this? The life of the church has been her most glorious characteristic; for it is a remarkable fact that, outside of the church, no great moral forces have yet been discovered in the elevation and salvation of the race. Just as it was with the miraculous manna sent to "the church in the wilderness," so it has been with the Spirit's life in the gospel church. That which Israel gathered daily became corrupt, but the hidden manna which was laid up before the Lord in the tabernacle was kept without putrefaction. So the vitality of "the living God" has never seen death in his church. The secret of this immortal life is found in that; it is not original, but derived. The blood has been kept warm at the extremities because the life at the heart is self-originating. This is the fact that covers all the powers of the Spirit's administration. It makes him the substitute of the personal, literal, human body of Christ on earth: the church takes the place of the human body of Christ in his absence, and by the church the Spirit is carrying on all his purposes of redemption on earth, in harmony with his priestly power in heaven. Then the Spirit, by the church, is supplying every blessing which Christ's human presence supplied in the days of his flesh. In this manner his truths are eliminated, his doctrines are vitalized, his promises applied, his ordinances made powerful, and he accomplishes all that Christ's living visible agency could accomplish. We can conceive of visibility of person giving increased potency to an *all-pervading* life, but we can also conceive of invisible agency like *electric fire* acquiring force by resistance, and intensity by

repression. So that the very subtlety of the Spirit's impulse in church life is a quick spark from the altar before which the Redeemer ministers in heaven. "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world," well defines the subtle relation that subsists between Christ and his church, and shows us what office the church bears in developing the soul-life of his people.

I argue that the church sustains a developing and perfecting relation to the soul-life of its own members—

3. *From the general tenor of Scriptural thought and expression, which treats of the church as the church.*

Nothing is clearer than that the general sweep of Scriptural thought and language on this subject is of such a character as cannot be applicable to the individual members of the church. They are addressed to, or they speak of, the body in its church-state. They speak of it as a house built up of lively stones, or as a flock under the care of a shepherd, or as a body made up of many members "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth." The whole presentation implies consent to the church-relation, and then, in view of it, there are certain privileges to be secured, and certain blessings to be enjoyed which cannot accrue to its members alone and as individuals. "From which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment, ministered and knit together, increases with the increase of God." "Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." These passages, with large classes which might be cited, treat of the life, unity, strength, and symbolical glory of the church. If it is suggested that they are very general, and refer to the whole body of the redeemed in earth and heaven, I assent to this; but at the same time, I claim that while they are thus general, each local church is but a detached body of the same people, united by conventional ties "to bear each other's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Beside this, the local church is perfect in itself, and perfect in church-life. What special promises

is made to the church general that is not made to the local church? What blessing did Christ procure for the church general which he did not procure for the church particular? The local church is not the fully developed body of Christ, but does it not possess all the essential properties of church life just as a child possesses all the properties of human life, though it is not a man? Whatever attributes or properties we ascribe to the general church, we must claim for the local church, because they are both found in vital union with Christ. The local church and the general church form but one temple of God. Every individual believer is the temple of God. But in church life there cannot be two shrines of divinity, and therefore there cannot be two temples of God. Every individual Christian is married to Christ, but the general church and the local church form but one bride of Christ, for there cannot be two brides of Christ. I do not see, therefore, that in point of real soul-life you can claim more for the totality of the churches than you can for the church composed of but two or three individuals assembled together in Christ's name. The vital union of the local church with Christ, "the head," is not direct, but mediate by the Spirit, and the same is strictly true to the totality of churches which compose the mystical body of Christ. I claim, therefore, the same soul-life for the local church that I claim for the church universal. When our Lord says of offence, "Tell it to the church"—"and whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven"—"there am I in the midst of them"—he obviously speaks to the local church just as unreservedly as he does when he says to the church mystical, "Lo, I am with you even to the end of the world." And when he said, "On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," he obviously meant the declaration to apply to the local church as well as to the mystical. Now if the figure, "gates of hell," alludes to the outpouring of hosts of foes from the gates of perdition, to attack and destroy the church of Christ by open malignity, as marshalled hosts would pour out from the gates of a city against a mighty

foe, then it is a marvellous fact in church life that the gates of hell never have prevailed against the local church. By "the gates of hell," I understand in this figurative use of the words, violent satanic opposition to the church, as we see it put forth in relentless persecution, aiming blows at her very existence. Have the gates of hell ever prevailed against the visible church by any violence whatever? They may have seemed to do so, but have never done so in reality. The church local may have been driven to "dens and caves of the earth," but she has always had a name and a local habitation somewhere. She may have been driven to hiding-places, as the birds of prey drive the nightingale to the copse of thorns, but, like her, the church has had her song in the night, and could sing it with the thorn at her breast. But the gates of hell have not prevailed against her. If you claim that the life of Christ be the jewel of the church mystical, I claim that the church local is the casket that bears it, and where the casket is, there will the treasure be also. If the universal church is the fabric which God is raising as an imperishable monument to "the praise of the glory of his grace," the local church is to complete its architectural perfection by bringing forth each stone to be incorporated into the temple, as Paul said to the local church at Corinth, "Ye are God's building." Under the laws of the redemptive economy the church local and the church universal are both working out the same end. In their operations, those laws are exactly analogous to the laws of the material universe. There is self-adjusting life-power in both that develops and perfects the souls of the regenerate. In the material universe we find attraction and repulsion—yielding and resistance—under the control of one power, so that the results obtained are a succession of reactions; but these reactions are not antagonistic, they are harmonious. The planets travel their orbits by the contrary impulses of complex mechanics, for one blow would stagnate all movement, while another would swing them from their path; but the inverse movements of both give them variety and order in all their revolutions. If the impetus were always to the centre, all

would consolidate into a mass perfectly immovable: if the tendency were always from it, all would be scattered, and stream through space in volatile particles. Law hangs them in a perfect poise. Law makes forces which have nothing in common, balances them in equilibrium, and the balance is so nice that the addition of a single stone would shatter the whole. So the complex laws of the scheme of redemption bring in the church to act an important part in developing the soul-life of the redeemed. The local church and the universal church, the church militant and the church triumphant, the word and the ordinances, the ministry and the membership, under the priesthood of Christ and the office of the Spirit, are all acting together, under the laws of redeeming love, to perfect all soul-life in "the church of the living God, which he hath purchased with his precious blood."

I argue this doctrine—

4. *From the historical life-developments of the church itself.*

Real soul-life has always been found in the church, and it has not been found out of it. God has always largely wrought out the life of the church by the church. Men never look elsewhere for light but to the sun. Men never look for soul-life but to the church. Sometimes that life has been extremely feeble in the church. It has beaten pulse by pulse in slow and distant beatings. You could barely detect its strokes. The most sensitive church physiologist would have been perplexed to have followed the traces of life through the veins to the arteries, and through the arteries to the heart. At times it has seemed as if every one of them was set, and every muscle rigid. The minute channels have seemed congealed and the larger chilled. But, thanks be to God, there has always remained the breath-stain of him who once breathed upon the church, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit; and they received it." From that day to this, the medium throb of communication with her living head has always held its supremacy. "Because I live, ye shall live also," is eternally true in the church. Vitality began with her genesis, and she held it with a tenacity coeval with his immortality. Eternal longevity is

her birth-right ; therefore she " holds it fast, and will not let it go, because it is her life." It is the most necessary element in her nature. All the elements in her constitution depend for their existence upon the life-blood which flows through it. While that continues to flow, life must remain even in a mortal. The sight may swim, the ear may be closed, the taste may be suspended, the nerves may become obtuse, the lungs may heave slowly, the heart may beat fitfully ; but while the blood flows the man lives. The principle of soul-life in the church is subtle and unscanned, but men have so long confessed its presence that they involuntarily look for it there. They are aware that if they find it not there, they will find it nowhere. The reason is, that, like all other sorts of life, it has always dissolved itself in a succession of classified manifestations. You always find it in the same place and under the same conditions. You always find flower-life in the rose-bush, and forest-life in the forests. You always find sympathetic life in the heart, and intellectual life in the brain. Where, then, will you look for soul-life but in the church ? Where will you look for this overmastering impulse but where the living God has planted it ? Life of his planting is deep seated in that palpitating soul-nature which is so nearly allied to his own essence. You can only see it in its developments. But where it exists there will inevitably be " first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." The divine life will develop itself in its fecundity of blessings. As the life of God stretches its reachings through all his eternal being, so the life of the church reaches to the lowest depths of the soul. It instructs her, it illuminates her, it gives motives to her moral sensibilities, power to her holy volitions, and joy to her god-like labours. It strengthens the grasp of faith, it feeds the torch of hope, and it hallows the glow of love. It is the great energy whereby each regenerate soul becomes a well-cut, a full-orbed gem for the Redeemer's diadem of life. The very object of Christ's work was that the church " might have life, and might have it more abundantly." Every gush of the more abundant life moulds every feature of the church into a distinct resemblance

to Christ, till he can dwell in the church as "the living God" and feel at home. "Whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." Christ could not dwell in the church were she dead, more than life can dwell in a tree without sap—more than the canopy of heaven can expand without light—more than a body can pulsate without breath. A living Deity must have a living temple. Yet no device of man can fabricate this life; every spark of the fire and every form of the flame is from "the living God." Man's appendages may enfeeble it, mystic observances may out-dazzle it, but it burns divinest in its own radiance. When left to do so it inspires the church to emulate her Lord's example when he said, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." It will identify the church with every agency which will elevate the human species. Like pure adamant, it will shine most resplendently in the darkest setting; like spikenard, it will shed its sweetest perfume upon the couch of sorrow; like a torch, it will cast its fairest illuminations upon the shades of the tomb. Our Redeemer gave us the pattern of what he expected the church to be, in his own life; and if the church partakes of his spirit the same principle will be enkindled in her breast. Through her exertions that life will subdue the barbarian, it will elevate the refined, it will repress the luxurious, it will control the fiery passion, it will abate the pang of anguish; in a word, it will lift up the head of dying man to the breast of Jesus, and make the two lives heave together as they pulsate in one. The inspired John exclaims, "Christ is our life," and the primitive church proved that he was, because she trod in his foot-prints. While her "life was hid with Christ in God," her anchor held immovable in the wildest tempests. Her love was always as warm as maternal tenderness, as gentle as the morning dew, and therefore her life expressed itself in no faint connections, by no equivocal motives. No alarm could quell her beneficence. She stood dauntless amid the outrage of earth and hell. She might spill her blood and fall in saving men, but she would not fly. *The* dubious stars of heaven might halt in their march, the sun

might go back ten degrees in his circuit, the tides might flee in fear to the ocean's depths, but the life of the primitive church could never languish. The rudiments of an unformed world were taking shape, the embryo of a new creation was catching its first pulse, the deep plenitude of God's life was taking new motion—nay, the blood of sprinkling itself cried from the earth for new companionships, and heroes, "of whom the world was not worthy," rushed to martyrdom that they might know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, being made conformable to his death. So, likewise, let the church of the living God in this day glorify him with her body and her spirit, which are his. "If this mind be not in you, ye have not the spirit of Christ; ye are none of his."

These are my arguments in support of the proposition that the church sustains a developing and perfecting relation to the soul-life of its own members. I do not know that they are conclusive to your minds; but I present them to you as at least worthy of your notice and thought. I am well aware that this theme is not exhausted in this discussion, but I have presented the topic in such a form as I hope will call further attention to it by able hands, and here I wish to leave it. Yet how can I leave it without one word of appeal to you who are the members of the body of Christ? Remember, my brethren, that the living church must answer to its life. Christianity must produce Christians. The harvest cannot contradict the seed. The fig-tree cannot bear olive berries, neither can life produce death. Remember the method by which this life operates, and give the greatest possible efficiency to its operation. The Scriptures uniformly present it as manifested in a most powerful but unseen fellowship which binds the body into a living active communion. Soul-life in the church is capable of enkindling the same life in others. The newly awakened power of this fellowship outweighs all other feelings, and subordinates them to itself. It betokens a coincidence of motive, sentiment, and principle, which enhances the life of the whole body, and blends the common force of the community into the tenderest

relationships. When the sacramental host of God's elect moves on in force, what enkindling confidence spreads from bosom to bosom, while man to man presses the advance with a firm and steady tread, gathering energy and order from every reciprocal glance and every kind gratulation. Each man of the sacred brotherhood pledges all his personal capacities and relative influences to preserve the integrity, to promote the extension, and to adorn the sacred brotherhood. The foundation on which it rests, the momentous interests which it involves, and the holy objects for which it was designed, call for full consecration from every member of the fraternity. Their organic life is a sacred trust, and "the living God" claims its use. They are the leaven, and in a silent, secret process of fermentation they are, by the forces of their continued operations, to diffuse the moisture through every particle of the mass. And yet no one must lose himself in the aggregate—no one must invite insignificance. The most self-depreciating member can stamp the impress of his moral life on every other living soul of the fellowship. No one may hide the candle under the bed on which he indulges his sloth, nor under the bushel in which he measures his pelf. But each must arise and trim his lamp, must bring out the flickering flame, and let it combine with the blazing pillar of fire. Feed the flame of brotherly love, then, for love in the church is life. I pretend not to know how the spirit of Christian men conveys life to the spirit of Christian men in church fellowship, but I am bold to assume that it does. I know not how a sunbeam excites a vibration in the eye, nor how the eye transmits it to the brain, nor how the brain sends it to the intelligent soul; but I thrill with the sensation every day. I know not how a spark carries an idea on a wire from man to man standing a thousand leagues apart, nor how the idea produces motion when it gets there, nor how the motion produces an impulse, nor how the impulse produces an action which, perchance, decides a struggle and makes or breaks a nation, while yet spark and wire know nothing about it. Much less can I tell how brotherly love in the heart pours its

impulses through hidden chords to the tongue, how the word from the tongue creates a move in the air, how that move strikes a nerve behind a brother's ear and flashes the impulse up to the brain and down to the heart, and how in an instant a globe of moisture trembles so lovingly in the brother's eye that you can almost see the image of Jesus at the right hand of God glistening in it. I cannot explain it. Nor do I care to know. It is enough that they are fellow-heirs of the grace of life—"in the church of the living God." I catch the impulse, and with them I live for ever, and am satisfied. Amen.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

BY BISHOP SIMPSON.

"What think ye of Christ."—MATTHEW xxii. 42.

THE words selected for our meditation, and to which your serious and prayerful attention is invited, are contained in the gospel according to St. Matthew, 22nd chapter and the 42nd verse: "What think ye of Christ?" The whole verse reads: "Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David."

The blessed Saviour was about to close his sojourn on earth. He had taught his disciples, had journeyed with them from place to place, had wrought multiplied miracles, had visited Jerusalem for the last time, and as he came near the city the people met him with songs of joy. They received him as a conqueror, and strewing branches in the way they cried out, "Hosanna! blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." The whole city was moved with this strange excitement, for it was the time of the beginning of the Passover, and the Jews from all parts of the country were gathered together—not only from all parts of Palestine, but from countries into which they were scattered throughout the world; for by their law they came up to keep the feast of the Passover. And they said, Who is this? Different answers were given; but the public attention was highly excited. In various ways they sought when he was in the temple to entangle him in his speech. They asked questions touching the law and touching the relation of the Jewish

people to the Roman government. Christ answered so wisely and discreetly that they found they were unable to entangle him, and then he turned to them and said, "What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, The son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?" And from that time forth, it is said, no man durst ask him any more questions.

That question which he asked of the Jews who were gathered enquiringly around him is a question which still resounds through the world. It has come down the whole length of the ages; it has been repeated by generation after generation; it has been taken up by nation after nation; it has been the theme of inquiry by philosophers and peasants; it is the subject of inquiry to-day in the schools; it is a question asked by infidel as well as Christian writers; it is a question which meets the scientists of the day in their investigations; everywhere and on all sides, and in all the languages of this babbling earth where the light of civilization has extended, the question is being asked, "What think ye of Christ?" To the Jew the question was, "Who is the Messiah to be?" Their prophets had foretold the coming of a glorious personage and deliverer. The seed of the woman was to bruise the serpent's head, the Shiloh, the Wonderful, the Counsellor. And the question asked was, "What kind of a personage is this Messiah to be whom you are expecting?" They answered, "He is to be the son of David." They had looked upon him as one of royal lineage. He was to come as a king, as a conqueror; Judah was to become the central land of the earth; out of it was to extend a government to the ends of the world. They had not taken into consideration the divine character of the Messiah. He was to be man, indeed, for he was to come in human form. He was to be also divine, for he was to be a Saviour. But this thought was not so closely connected with their expectation: and the Saviour starts the question, if he be a man, how can he be David's Lord? How is he to sit

on the right hand of the Majesty on high, until his enemies be made his footstool? And how does David in the spirit (that is, by inspiration) call him Lord? Who Christ was to be, the Jews found only from their books of prophecy. They traced carefully the characteristics attributed to the Messiah, and they found these to be strange, sometimes almost contradictory; for in some places he was represented as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He is represented as a lamb led to the slaughter: "As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Then, again, he is represented as the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He is the lion of the tribe of Judah: of his government there was to be no end. He was to set up a kingdom on earth that should never be moved.

They could not understand how these characteristics, so different, could meet in a single person; for they did not take into their thoughts clearly, as I have said, both his human and his divine nature. The question asked of us, however, as it comes, is not precisely in this form. It is not, What are the characteristics of the Messiah to be as the coming Messiah? but, Is Jesus of Nazareth that Messiah, and what is he to us? In the apostolic age the great work of the apostle was to show the Jews that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, the promised one; that he fulfilled in himself the prophecies of Scripture, and proved himself to be the Son of God with power. To us, standing where we do, the great import of the question is: "What is Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah of God, to us? Was he simply a man, coming in the character of a man, clothed with the attributes and sympathies of a man, to do the work of a man, or was he divine? Was he the Son of God? Was there in him united both the human and the divine nature?" Now in answering this question we might appeal to the Word of God and show what he was in prophecy—what he was in fact—how he proved himself by miracle to be divine, how the elements obeyed him, how diseases fled from him, how the dead heard his voice. The wonderful scenes connected with his death, resurrection, and ascension might come up before us to clearly show to us

that he was the Son of God; but I prefer rather, standing at the lapse of eighteen hundred years and more from the time of his offering up himself, a sacrifice for sin, to look at the results of his mission, confining ourselves chiefly to this train of thought, and ask: What has Christ shown himself to be in the development of his kingdom and in the influence of his doctrines upon the human family during the lapse of these ages?

Now, I think I may say that all will admit that truth is that which gives compass and power to the human mind—that truth sets us free. It is a trite saying, but a true one, that knowledge is power. The man who knows is the man who is able to do. The people who have knowledge become the ruling peoples of the world. Error has a tendency to destroy, degrade, and sink. Now, although we cannot tell a truth and an error from its immediate effect, we may trace the characteristics by the effects running through the ages. An error may so harmonize for the time being with the events in the midst of which it is propagated as to seem to have great power; but error grows weak, decays, dies; truth only is immortal. Now the nation or the people that receives a great truth, that receives the highest truths, rises to the highest form of civilization; the nation that believes error goes downward. The same law may be stated in reference to ignorance and wisdom, for ignorance is the lack of knowledge of truth around us. You might say worldly truth, secular wisdom, is the having the use of knowledge essential for the transaction of all duties. We see that the ignorant nations are weak and decaying. Look at our savage tribes; see the people of the interior of Africa; look at the tribes of the islands, the hordes of Central Asia, how weak they are! They do not know the truth; the truth does not make them free. Trace the history of the nations of the earth, and you will find that in proportion to their knowledge they rise in comfort, in strength, in power. It would be a strange imputation upon the divine government to say that God had made human happiness to consist in the belief of a falsehood—that the highest civilization would be drawn out of an error. It would be contrary to all our conceptions of the

divine wisdom and the divine government. And now if we can trace all through the centuries what the faith of a people is, what the belief of a people is in their ascent to the highest civilization, we have at least a strong probability of the truth that they receive. It is this train of thought I desire to dwell upon chiefly, and to show that in the lapse of ages, in its influence on the world, Christianity proves itself to be of God, and that Christ proves himself to be divine.

And the first suggestion which comes out of this question—"What think ye of Christ?"—is this: that Christianity challenges human thought. It is a system of thought; its very first impulse is to set mind at work, to set men to thinking. Now idolatry and superstition bind men down. Man sinks in awe. He is commanded to obey by a power that he knows not; ceremonies and rituals are enjoined upon him the reason or the meaning of which he cannot comprehend. There is no wide-extended thought connected with it.

You will find that in all systems of error the tendency is to prevent men from thinking. Tyrants do not wish their people to think—to discuss human rights and forms of government. If men have not a clear conviction that the system which they profess will bear examination, they are not willing to refer it to human judgment: they bring authority to bear upon man, and prevent the exercise of man's reason; but Christianity everywhere appeals to human thought. Christ says, "Judge ye;" the voice of revelation is, "Come and let us reason together;" and Christ in his appeal says, even in reference to himself, involving the highest question, and the question most vital to humanity, "What think ye of Christ?" Now, this is one of the characteristics of Christianity, as in contrast with other systems. It is a system, as I have said, that unlocks the fetters that bind man; it sets mind free; it offers it the universe for its theatre, and eternity for its scope. Man is not only to think of things of earth, but of things of heaven. He is to think of time, of eternity, of humanity, of God. He is brought *to think* directly of the nature of God; to penetrate, as it were,

within the veil ; to examine the great mysteries that lie at the foundation ; and this thought gives birth to other thoughts. But not only is Christianity a system of thought, and are we commanded to be a thinking people if we be Christians, but look at the character of the thought—how elevated, how sublime ! How it elevates man to take into his mind these great conceptions ! How he travels outside of the realm of the material into the spiritual and the invisible ! How the mind soars away from the confines of matter when he attacks these questions, and the man feels something of his immortal nature !

Not only is Christianity this system thus commanding attention, but we find that all along in its history it has had a tendency to destroy error by giving man a knowledge of the truth. I see in Christianity something of its Divine character, and in Christ his Divine nature, from the fact that Christianity has changed the entire character of worship throughout the world. At the time when Christ came, outside of the little territory of Palestine (and we scarcely think, sometimes, how small it is ; for in a little tract of land not one-fourth as large as one of our moderately sized States is comprised the whole of what was the ancient Holy Land), all the world was idolatrous ; and even in that territory there was much vice. You know that the Israelitish people oftentimes ran into idolatry ; but outside of that little strip of country on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea the whole world was an idolatrous world. There were different forms of idolatry, some low, some beautiful. In Greece idolatry was a beautiful system. The painters had painted beautifully ; the sculptors had chiselled a Jupiter, a Juno, a Minerva, and a Venus, objects of beauty. The human intellect had taken in the idea of the grandeur and excellence of the human form, and they worshipped the Deity through the human form. Beautiful temples were erected in Ephesus, and on the coast of Asia Minor was the wonderful Temple of Diana. The image which, it is said, had fallen down from Jupiter was at its shrine ; and when Christ was preached men became excited, because, in the preaching of the Cross, they were turned

away from their forms of worship, and hence their hatred to Christianity; but to-day, after the lapse of eighteen hundred years, where are the idols? Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Venus, Apollo, hath not a shrine to-day on earth. There is not a knee among the multiplied millions of men that bows before one of these deities. There is not a form of worship that was then practised in civilized lands but has passed away for ever; and that has been brought about by the simple preaching of the character of Christ. He claims to be the one God, the one Lord. The deities have passed away, and, just as Dagon fell before the Ark, so have all those heathen deities passed away from sight; and nowhere, now, in any enlightened country, is an idol worshipped. There is idolatry, but how low! Has it occurred to you that there is not a form of beauty worshipped in idolatry to-day? Go where there are heathen temples, and what strange caricatures of humanity and of the animal creation are put in them—objects that would seem to be hideous in their make and form! The elements of beauty are lacking; beauty has taken its flight from systems of error, and degradation has drawn them downward, as error always will drag its votaries.

Now what power could have thus changed the whole forms of worship but a Divine power? For man in his worship approaches nearer to the spiritual, and Christ, in that he joins himself to those spiritualized thoughts of man, comes to us in his Divine nature. He becomes the object of our worship, and sweeps all other objects away. How can we account for the fact that the teachings of Christ have become universal—and when I say universal, I mean in enlightened countries—supplanting the teachings of all other systems? The world admired Plato, and justly, for his breadth of intellect, for his depth of thought; the world admired Socrates, and justly, for the purity of his precepts, and for the clearness of his intellect; the world had listened to orators strong, moving, stirring; and yet the words of no philosopher and no orator ring through the earth to-day as do those of Jesus of Nazareth. Demosthenes stood yonder on the edge of the hill with great multitudes

around him, he himself just in sight of the distant ocean, which seemed from its rising billows to be to him the emblem of freedom, and whose sound echoed in his ears, and he uttered those philippics that roused the Grecian people to arms, and made himself a name that is to a great extent immortal. Christ sat calmly on the side of the hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee, the little sheet of water sleeping sweetly in the bosom of its surrounding hills, and the multitudes gathered around him. He simply opened his lips and taught them, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." And the multitudes listened: there was no stormy applause; there was no excitement to arms; the women and the children were listening to his words. And yet the words of Demosthenes to-day are only read in the schools by the scholars, by the few, by one in a thousand; but the words of Jesus are sweeping through the land. The old man reads them before he closes his eyes in death, and the little child reads them in the family circle and in the Sunday-school; they are almost in every family, and in almost every hand. They are taking the wings of the morning, and flying to the uttermost parts of the earth. How can you account for it?

Again: look at the effect which the thoughts he gives us—our thinking of Christ—Christ interwoven into the character of our civilization—has upon letters, upon literature. We survey the earth to-day, and we find heathenism in its various forms, and we have Mohammedanism, Judaism, and Christianity. Now, where do you find the printing press, the morning papers, the libraries? Where do you find thoughts dropping like snow-flakes from the press? Where do you find seminaries, schools, colleges, universities, and schools of art? But one answer can be given: they are in Christian countries in their highest excellence; in heathenism, not at all; in Mohammedanism, very imperfectly; and Judaism has scarcely a theatre on which to act: but *Christianity*, wherever it goes, promotes the study of

letters. Where are the common schools? Where has the great law taken hold of the human mind that every child must be educated, that the intellect of the world belongs to the world, and that it is the duty of the nations to see that every spark of intellect be kindled to its highest flames? It is only in Christian nations. Now, admitting that Christ is not an object of worship, not divine, how can you account for the fact that error could produce such results? One thing more: if Christianity be not true, and if Christ be not divine, then he was an impostor; the whole system is one of falsehood and error, and error is made to produce grander results than have ever marked our earth; for it is just where people worship Christ, praise him as God, bow the knee before him, build sanctuaries, and proclaim his power, that all these results manifest themselves.

Not only is this so in letters, but in all that concerns the welfare of men. Where has man human comforts? Where does art display itself? Where does science rejoice? Where have we edifices of comfort for our families? Where have we even raiment that is neat, commodious, and tasteful? Where does business flourish? Where are the steamships, the railroads, the telegraphic wires? All had their birth and their progress in Christian countries, and heathenism is but learning to-day of us some of the elements of the higher forms of human civilization. Now in all these respects Christianity commends itself to us as bearing the richest fruits. The people who worship Christ as God are the inventors, the discoverers, the law-givers to our earth; so that their thoughts of Christ are the thoughts that give power to the world. And just here let me remark that it is not a little matter what men shall think. "What think ye of Christ?" implies in it not only, as I said at first, the character of the thought, the necessity of thinking, but more, and that is, the kind of thought man cultivates affects his whole being, affects his temporal as well as his spiritual interests, affects him for time as well as for eternity. And we see that it is simply the thought that man has that is making the vast difference to-day between heathenism and Christianity.

The one never thinks of Christ or rejects him, the other worships Christ as God. Thinking about Christ has led to all the diversity of action that there is in the world, such is the power of thought. It is unseen, and yet it influences us. Is not the lesson to us everywhere, "The unseen influences us"? Thought leads and governs us. We see this in nature. Christ is the great ruler, the great governing thought, and controls other thoughts. Christ becomes to us the great principle governing humanity—his law, his will, his character, his thoughts influencing us—and just as the needle guides the traveller in navigation, and we are dependent upon it to go to distant lands in safety for the luxuries that come from remote regions of the earth, so Christ, though himself unseen, and though his law, which sweeps through the world, may not be observed by us, still it is moulding, fashioning, and changing the thoughts and plans of entire humanity.

Now, then, where Christ is received as divine, humanity becomes dignified and ennobled; for if Christ was divine, the human nature may be very nearly joined to God—how nearly I cannot tell. Christ was the express image of the Father; he had the fulness of the Godhead bodily; he was very God, though in human form. And if so, how near to humanity does God come! If he came to that human form, and was with Christ and in Christ, may not that same divinity come very near to us? Is it strange that the Saviour says, "I will come unto you, and will bring the Father with me"? God is represented as coming to humanity. We have in the incarnation of Christ, recognizing him as divine, the fact that Deity may be joined to humanity; and if so, how is humanity ennobled? God has special care for man, and man is raised up now far above the grade of animals, far above the grade of transient beings; he is the loved one and the cared-for one of God; the one with whom God loves to dwell. If so, how great does humanity become—how dignified our nature! What are we? The sons of God, hastening toward eternity, not knowing what

we shall be, but knowing that when he shall appear we shall be like him; so that the very conception of Christ's divine character as incarnate becomes a great inspiration to the human soul. Man rises, ascends heavenward, is lifted up from the grovelling appetites and thoughts of the day, and becomes the prospective inhabitant of eternity, the prospective heir of a throne. Now if the same thought be carried out, do we not see that just as humanity becomes dignified by the thought of the divine character of Christ being connected with it, human life becomes more precious, and in Christian countries life is of great value? In countries where Christ is not worshipped, old people are neglected and left to perish and die, cast into deserts, hurled from rocks, and sometimes thrown to wild beasts; little children are exposed; widows burn themselves on the funeral pile of their husbands, and life is but little thought of; but when you connect Christ's life with human life, human life becomes precious. I must regard the rights of others because there is something divine connected with them. That nature in which Christ lived commands my attention, and I must do no wrong. Human life is regarded as a great fact.

Not only do I find the law of justice coming in, but also the law of benevolence. Christ connected with human nature sanctifies it in my view. I must care for humanity everywhere, for it bears the impress of my Father. There is something of the sacred connected with it; and wherever there is a wandering son of man, there is one for whom Jesus cares, one for whom the great Father in heaven feels a deep sympathy. The foundation of benevolence is found in the fact that the divine nature of Christ is connected with humanity. I may care but little for that boy who comes to my door; he is ragged, poor, worthless, and I may be ready to turn him away; but some one whispers, "He is a profligate boy, it is true, but he is the son of a very near friend, and the father is very anxious that some means should be used to reform him and try to do him good." Hearing this, I ask him to come in. I help to clothe him, talk to and advise with him, and lead him home again to his father, who is ready

to receive him with open arms; and he thanks me for restoring to him his own wandering but dear boy. Such is humanity everywhere. Wherever I see the form of a man, there is a son of my Father, one for whom Jesus died, one whom he is longing to have home again; and he wants you and me to help to clothe and care for him, to advise and try to rescue him; and if we do, the Father not only receives him with open arms, but is ready to bless us for what we do. God's heart is on the salvation of the human family, and when we try to save him, his blessing is with us. There comes in a great reason why we should work for others. Oh! that outcast, wretched, forlorn wandering one is the son of my Father, and he wants me to save and rescue and bring him home again. I am not to have a cold, hard heart; I am not to turn him away; I am not to say, "Let him perish." No, no: I am going after him to plead with and save him if I can. This lesson of benevolence comes to me out of the character of Christ. And now, when I see what Christianity has done and is doing in the world—how it is a fountain of benevolence everywhere, how it is building asylums, hospitals, reformatory institutions, how it is spreading good will everywhere among men; and when I see how perfectly Christ fulfils the prophecies of the Old Testament Scriptures—I see in the progress of Christianity the unfolding of the character of Christ as adapted to the world.

I have only time to note one prophecy, and I must do that very briefly. Isaiah saw him as a child that was born, a son that was given, and his name should be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, and of his government and times there should be no end. Now, that applied to the character of Christ. He came as a little child, the seed of the woman; he came as the son of a royal lineage to take the government on his shoulder. When men looked at him they saw him as Wonderful. He looked on the water, and it blushed into wine; he spoke to disease, and it fled; he stood over the grave, and the dead heard him. The sun sympathized with him in sorrow, and the earth rocked to its

centre; and the opening heavens received him as he rose from the dead. He was Wonderful. But not only so—Counsellor. He spake as never man spake: words of wisdom dropped from his lips. They listened to him; they learned truth. He was the great Teacher of humanity, the Counsellor. And then he was the mighty God. With what power did he gird himself! How he spoke, and the elements obeyed him! And then he was the everlasting Father, full of pity all the time, and never giving up the world. His enemies had their hands red with his blood, and he said, "Father, forgive them." His disciples forsook him, but the first message he sent back was, "Go tell the disciples and Peter"—do not forget Peter, though he cursed and swore and denied that he knew me. Words of compassion dropped from his lips. He was the everlasting Father. There never was a case of sorrow that he turned away, and never was there a helpless one whom he did not aid. And then he was the Prince of Peace.

Well, now, these characteristics of Christ that I have sketched, are they not all fulfilled in Christianity? Do we not see the Christian world developing in the same way? Christianity was small at first. The cry of a child was heard; then it grew strong like a son, coming to grasp the government; and then it was wonderful. Christianity has excited the attention of men because there is something about it which arrests their thought. People by-and-by weary of hearing scientific lectures, and also of listening to societies that gather together; but people have been listening for eighteen hundred years and more to the same wonderful story of Christianity, and people are listening now to the word of God who never heard it before. Congregations are growing; the people are gathering around the cross; the world hears the "old, old story," and rejoices in it, and the changes are wonderful. The drunkard becomes sober, the dishonest man becomes honest, and the wicked man becomes pure. Religion is conquering the world. There is something wonderful about it. And then, as religion passes from this reformatory state, it is a counsellor. I have already alluded to

the fact that it is building its schools everywhere: Christianity is a teaching system. Again, look out at its power. Where is the power of the world to-day but in Christian hands? It is seizing hold of the elements that God has placed everywhere.

And then it is the everlasting Father in this: it is full of pity, full of compassion. Where else have you your societies for the aged, the weak, and the poor? The dumb to-day are made to speak by Christian teachers, and the blind are made to read the Word of God. Effort after effort is being put forth, and Christianity is showing itself. We have got thus far in the development of Christianity; we are on the edge of the coming reign of the King of Peace. I do rejoice that we have seen this Christianity travelling in the greatness of its strength: it is conquering the world. I recognize Christ as he comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah, travelling in the greatness of his strength, and I hear him say, as he comes, "I speak in righteousness, mighty to save."

But what think ye of Christ? When we look at him personally he is our Saviour. He died for us, and if he be God as well as man and died for us, our salvation is possible. If he was merely man, he might fail and we might not be saved, but when we look at him as the eternal God, we see him paying our debt and freeing our souls from bondage. The blood of Christ takes away the guilt and stain of all sin. I tell you, my Christian friends, that in the fact of the divine connected with the human is all our hope for salvation. The blood of Jesus can wash your sins away. But if you are like me—and I suppose you are—when you look back upon the history of your past life, there are words and sentences you would like to blot out. (There are whole pages I would like to cut out if I could, which I weep and pray over, but which tears and prayers will not wash out.) There is only one thing that can do it, and that is the blood of Jesus; but, thank God, that can take every stain away. The infinite merit of the eternal God, being a sacrifice for sin, can wash all my sins away. I may be freely justified from all my transgressions. When I think of Christ, then, as my Saviour, Oh, how precious

And then, when I think of him as the invisible God everywhere; when I think of his being with me for many years, knocking at the door of my heart, when I would not listen to him; following me when I was wandering; watching over me when I forgot him; never forgetting me, along the whole journey of life—what a precious Saviour does he become! And then he has promised to be with me always—in health, in sickness, in life, and in death, and ultimately to take me unto himself in glory. Oh! what shall I think of Christ, but that he is worthy of all my love and adoration? My soul goes out in homage and in praise unto him.

What think ye of Christ, now my dear friends? Whatever we may think, I know what others think. I know what angels think; for when they saw Christ coming to earth in the form of a little babe they pressed through the doors of heaven, came down to earth, and sang in the ears of the shepherds, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men.” They shouted for joy, and all the hosts of heaven were with them there; and when Christ had finished his mission here, and was laid in the grave, they came and rolled away the stone. And it seems to me they shouted as he rose, and from the Mount of Ascension they opened the doors of glory and came down and said, “This Jesus whom you see ascending, in like manner shall descend again,” whereupon this shout was heard in heaven: “Lift up your heads, ye everlasting doors, and let the King of Glory come in, the King of kings and Lord of lords.” That is what the angels think of him. And I know what God the Father thinks of him: for when he came into the world he said, “Let all the angels of God worship him; this is my beloved Son, hear ye him.” He showed his affection for Christ in the exercise of the power by which he raised him from the dead. And the dead think of him; those who were in the grave heard the voice of the Son of God, and after his resurrection they came forth. What do the host of the departed ones that are now in glory think of Christ? They trusted in him, and were saved. Our fathers and mothers trusted in Jesus, and were saved; and our little ones, washed in his atoning

blood, and taken home to heaven, are now joining in songs. "Unto him that loved us, and hath washed us in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, unto him be glory, dominion, praise, and power for ever and ever." The universe is praising Christ; all in heaven adore him; the saints on earth are worshipping him; the lost in hell are trembling under his frown; and what shall men do? Oh! what think ye of Christ? Receive him to-day as your Saviour; own him as your Lord; trust in his atoning merit; give yourselves up to his service; and may every heart bow before Jesus, and may we join in that great throng that in the consummation of all things shall crown him Lord of all.

AGAINST OVER-CURIOSITY.

By REV. G. H. TYNG, JUN., NEW YORK.

"What is that to thee? Follow thou me."—JOHN xxi, 22.

THIS is a reproof which all busybodies would do well to heed. Peter had only himself to blame for the sharp rebuke that Jesus spake. Instead of implicitly obeying and looking towards Christ, with whom he was journeying, it is written that he turned about to see what John was doing, and instantly inquiry was started in his mind: what is poor, effeminate, sentimental John to do after the Lord shall have left us? It finds words at last. He asks: "Lord, what shall this man do?" Jesus replies: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me."

It all happened on this wise. After the resurrection of our Lord, he made himself known to the company of his disciples, who were fishing from boats on the Sea of Galilee. Speaking to them from the shore, he bade Peter let down his net on the right side of the boat, and immediately it inclosed a great multitude of fishes. Plunging into shallow water to draw the net towards shore, Peter sought, in his impetuosity, first of all, the person of the Christ who had spoken to him. Already the coals are kindled, and a fish is broiling on them. It needs not their draught to prepare for them the feast. So tenderly would the Lord teach them that in all their physical wants, as well as their spiritual, he was to prove their provider. Then the interview between Peter and our Lord took place, which is imprinted upon the memory and the conscience of every reclaimed backslider.

“Lovest thou me more than these?” said Jesus’ voice. Once before Peter had professed a greater devotion than all the other disciples, and he is reminded of that foolish boast. “Lovest thou me more than all the other disciples?” In the peculiar words of the Greek language, which are employed, Peter responds: “Yea, Lord, I not only love thee as a friend; I dearly love thee.” But the second time Jesus asks: “Lovest thou me” as a friend? and the second time the disciple replies: “Yea, Lord, I dearly love thee.” Then Jesus takes Peter’s own word, and asks him: “Dost thou dearly love me?” Peter was grieved because he asked the same question so often, and he answered with warmth: “Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I dearly love thee.” “Feed my lambs; tend my sheep; feed my sheep,” are the three different charges which are given to him. But he ends the interview with the two words: “Follow me.” Peter is obedient to the command, and begins his journeying with the risen Lord; but as soon as he had taken a few steps he looked about him, to know what his fellow-disciple was doing, and that moment brought the only rebuke which came from the lips of the Christ between the day of his resurrection and his ascension.

Followers of Peter in this peculiar mark of his character were to be found in all the early churches. He commanded the Thessalonians, who were troubled with this evil, in his first epistle, to “study to be quiet,” to “do their own business,” and to avoid the evil into which they had fallen. “For we hear that there are some who walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.” And so, when writing to Timothy, he charges him to be most careful in his exhortation, that the women of his ministry and pastorate might learn to avoid the evils with which their lives were marked; for he has heard that they have “learned to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also, and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.” Ah! Peter always remembered this interview. The evidence you have in his first epistle, when writing to all the scattered Christians throughout

Pontus, Galatia, and Bithynia. His memory of his own fall gives force to the words of entreaty with which he addresses them in chapter iv. 15: "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters." It is a most suggestive fact that the very passage upon which Rome founds its record of primacy for the successors of Peter, so called, should itself contain the declaration that no disciple of John is subject to Peter; this to last not only through the Lord's life, but until he shall come again.

Before we reach the minute discussion of our text, there are two prefatory thoughts which must needs be disposed of. We see from this passage how *the plainest words of Christ have been perverted*; for this one expression of rebuke was taken up by the church of that time, and interpreted to mean that that disciple should not die. Yet Jesus said not unto them: "He shall not die;" but, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" There is no error in the world which has not grown close to some truth. There is no heresy in Christendom which is not founded upon the misrepresentation of some Scripture. When we see such a mistake and blunder among the earliest Christians, we may well, in our later day, begin to doubt all tradition, and when men talk to us about inferences, ask for words. All the errors of the Roman Church cluster about passages which are inconsistent in their interpretation with the context; and the difficulty felt by so many persons to acknowledge the absolute, essential deity of Jesus Christ is founded upon those passages which declare his mediatorial submission and his representative inferiority to God the Father. It is said that to Peter he gave the keys—aye, and the power of opening and closing the Kingdom of Heaven resides in the successors of this apostle! Peter was given two keys: the one to open the kingdom to the Jews, and the other for the Gentiles. On the day of Pentecost he opened it to three thousand Jews, and at the house of Cornelius he opened it to the Gentiles; and from that day to this there has been no need of keys, for the door *has stood wide open*. Even so at the time of the Passover, our

Lord said of the bread and the wine: "This is my body;" "this is my blood;" and we are taught by those about us that he meant an absolute identification of his own personality with these poor creatures of bread and wine. It avails nothing for us to say that, in the early celebrations of the Passover feast, the Jew who presided was compelled to say, in reference to the lamb: "This is the Lord's Passover." And yet it might avail if men carried out consistently the interpretation; for, just as the lamb is the memorial fact of their delivery from Egypt, so should the bread and wine represent the body and blood of Christ, his obedience and his expiation for our shortcomings, our sins—nothing less. I need not illustrate farther. The plainest words of Scripture have been perverted, and he who will read this Word must perceive always the careful rule of Scripture itself, if he would be protected from error: "Compare spiritual things with spiritual." Believe nothing that is founded upon a single passage, as necessary to salvation. Surely, a work that was given to reveal God's grace must make its central truths most plain on many pages.

But then, again, we learn from this incident how *the best graces sometimes degenerate into the worst sins*. There is something very peculiar in the Gospel about the relation which existed between Peter and John. We meet them, with James and Jesus, on Mount Hermon, during the marvellous scene of the Transfiguration. They were permitted to be the companions of our Lord in his Gethsemane struggle; they ran, on the first day of the week, to the sepulchre, and saw the linen clothes lie, and the napkin folded by itself. Wherever you find one, you will be sure to find the other of these two apostles. A peculiar bond of sympathy and brotherly confidence united them. In honour they preferred one another; they echoed each other. Brotherly love has, in the days of the gospel, no higher exhibition than the association of Peter and John. But let one suspicious thought, one infinitesimal emotion of jealous pique, enter, and all this habit of communion changes into the bitterness of seeking occasion against the brother, of backbiting when he is

absent, of slander in the misrepresentation of his innocent deed. Brethren, which of you has not recognized it as a fact that there is no alienation in this world so great as that between former familiar friends? When love changes to hate, it is the most horrid hatred out of hell. Be, therefore, careful in thy personal relationship and friendship and brotherliness, lest any root of bitterness shall spring up in thy heart. Oh! if thou hast given thy pledge to another, watch thy heart closely, root up the first manifestation of that which may poison thy whole character and darken thy whole life. Cain, thou art thy brother's keeper. Be not a jealous judge; be not a murderer in heart, if not by act. Simeon, Judah, Reuben, ye sons of Jacob, envy not Joseph, though he be clothed in brighter colours and seems to have more of the father's love. Saul, Saul, why dost thou compel David to write that plaintive psalm, to weep as a fugitive in the land? Let this incident teach us all the carefulness which is needful in maintaining a loving character. Surely you can see from it how close the country of brotherly love is to the land of hate and hell.

And now let us look at the text itself. It teaches us two things: first, the limits of curiosity; and, second, the line of true carefulness.

I. THE LIMITS OF CURIOSITY. "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." No one of us will pretend to deny that there is a sphere in which the mind may be covetous of knowledge. This is the inspiration of all science; this is the experience of all religion. The little child shows the awakening of curiosity in its dull, half-intelligent look at the flame of the candle. The boy manifests, says Goodrich, in his toys the peculiar law which governs his thoughts; "it assails him in his top's strange hum; it breathes in his whistle; it echoes in his drum." It is curiosity which gives zest to study, impels those strange and abstruse questions of the nursery and the school-room to which absolutely no answer can be given. Teach your child the person of God—tell him about creation—and the little one will turn upon you with the unanswerable question: "Who made God?"

Curiosity looks out beyond the sky in its desire to obtain that which eludes its grasp. Even so in science; it may calculate the depth of the atmosphere, but what is beyond? Who may measure infinite space? It may analyse complex substances, but who can tell what the element is that resolves one of the sixty and more which compose the earth's crust. So sure was Socrates of this region of obscurity, that it is said in history that he abandoned the search of nature for the discussion of moral questions and rules of conduct, and he said he knew no reason why the Oracle of Delphi pronounced him to be the wisest of men, except it was that, being conscious of his ignorance, he was willing to confess that he knew nothing. Curiosity has its sphere. To curb it when it becomes presumptuous is the one care and concern of the wise man and the Christian.

“What is that to thee?”

1. We are all troubled much about the *duties of other people*. Many men, and women too, are living in this world simply to keep other people straight. They are often self-appointed jailers for those who live in comfort and in palaces. God has made them keepers of their own vineyard, but they spend their time looking after other vines. Dr. South says that they are always outward, they are never homeward bound; they are looking about them; they never think of such a thing as looking within themselves; they can hardly relish or digest anything in their own houses unless they know about their neighbour's fare; they cannot sleep soundly unless they know the hours of their neighbour's habits, who visits them, what income they have, how much they spend, how much they owe, how much somebody else owes them. This kind of social curiosity goes beyond these facts, even to criticise and correct and counsel the government of neighbours' families. The people that have no children are the wisest educators of children, and are constantly advising new methods of development. It enters into the social integrity of life, into the church activity of individuals, and is very severe about the Christian consistency of those who in humility surpass *their critics*. No class of persons in the community are

such prey for these curious critics as ministers of the gospel. Their lives are subject to a sifting which few other lives would endure; their acts are perverted and misrepresented by a malice which is excited by no other class in the community. Now, against all such tendencies and engagements of thought, our Lord says to Peter: "What is that to thee?" Of all uncomfortable people that God leaves upon this earth to annoy the saints, the tale-bearer is the worst. His own condemnation is that at last nobody trusts him, unless he wants to advertise his secret. He is like those men who travel Broadway with advertisements before them and behind them, in the constant repetition of the little things that he has heard. Old Owen says that "he is like the soldier's dog in the garrison, who lives on the little scraps of food that the men do give him, and does the chores of the whole company." There is a parity of guilt recognized in the community between the man who steals and the man who receives stolen goods. If the community was true to itself, there would be a like parity between the man who tells and the one who hears idle gossip and slanderous rumour. An old writer used to say that both ought to be hung—the one by his tongue and the other by his ears. Peter, let John alone. Thou hast all that thou canst do in caring for thyself. I give my young friends a practical counsel when I tell them a plan upon which I will act, no matter what comes: any person who tells me anything about anybody else, must stand responsible for what he says, and I shall repeat it immediately it is stated to me. If such a principle ruled through society, busybodies would hide themselves in the bushes. The tongue of a busybody is like the tail of Samson's foxes—a fire-brand which sets the world on fire. He first introduces a cavil in conversation; he draws you out until you have expressed your opinion; he takes your opinion back to the one about whom you have spoken; he listens for his anger to give vent, and then brings back to you the words that he has heard, whilst he himself is the greatest sinner of the three. Now, our Lord limits social curiosity very clearly. *Unless you are appointed to be a detective by the police, or*

elevated to the judiciary by the people, you have no business with anybody but yourself, except their good side. It is a maxim of unailing truth that no one ever pries into another man's concerns but with the design to do, or to be able at some future time to do, him evil. How this removes every excuse from some of you who have long been cavilling at the inconsistency of Christians—who have said that you would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ if the Church was not so inconsistent. My dear, sensible brother, what has that to do with you? Will it remove your sin, will it lessen your condemnation, because the whole church may be condemned? Will it close the mouth of the condemning law? Can such a cavil stand the test of common sense?

2. But again. The limits of curiosity are concerned about *the purposes of God*. In regard to the word of God's revelation, the best thing for the Christian life and the Church is concealment. If there was no light from him, there could be no communion of our souls with him. If there was no darkness, then there would be no reverence from our hearts paid to his great heart of holiness and love. He is wise among us who recognizes this limit of curiosity about the Divine purposes. But Peter was foolish; he was most anxious to know what was to become of John, how he was to die, what was to be his life. Ah! Peter, was it not said to thee, on that night before the Passion, "What I do thou knowest not now; thou shalt know hereafter"? How vain to pry into God's unexpressed thoughts! It cannot be otherwise than that his deep purposes should be hidden, for he is God, and his designs cannot be scanned and measured by human wisdom. "Oh, the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how terrible are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" said one very near to the heart of God. So does he manifest his independence of the will and the counsel of his creatures. It is the glory of God to conceal his purposes. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?" Such concealment is adapted to our condition. He trains us by it to submission; he promotes within us humility; he awakens us to constant, ceaseless vigilance; he inspires dili-

gence in our daily living; by gradually removing the cloud from his throne, he makes a constant revelation of truth. Well said old Robinson, "There is new light in God's word that is yet to break out." Who knows all the mysteries contained in this volume! Eternity will not be long enough for the full development of all that was in God's thought, God's heart, when he inspired this book. But still there are among us men who are curiosity-mongers about the purposes of God. They will have all God's depths to be shallows rather than confess their own inability to fathom all mysteries with their own reason. He that goes to school to his own reason has a fool for his schoolmaster. These suicides that every now and then sadden our lives and homes and hearts—do they not make us tremble when we see the uncertainty of human reason? In a moment of deflection it forgets responsibility, the ties of love, and seeks oblivion. To become blind, all that you need to do is to go out to-morrow and look up towards the noon-day sun, without winking—the excess of brightness will destroy sight. Dear friends, so it is with God and his purposes. To be curious about the things that he withholds is to increase spiritual darkness, and not to develop knowledge. Do not try to pick locks to which God has given no keys. Remember Adam, in his temptation, how he would be as God, and lost Paradise. Remember the men at Bethshemesh, who accompanied the ark on its return from the Philistines: it was not enough for them that they had care of the ark, but they must open it to look in, and the plague smote fifty thousand of them for their presumption. Even so are men tempted to look into the things and the purposes of God, which surpass, and are intended to surpass, their present capacity. But God has made very plain all that we need to know about his purposes. There is one decree that is certainly clear, and in reference to which there can be no doubt. There may be doubts caused in your mind about God's election, about his irresistible grace, about all the sovereignty of his government; but, brother, there is no doubt about this decree: "*He that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be*

damned." There is no lack of perspicuity in these words, or the point of this sentence. Until thou hast solved that decree by thine own submission, thou hast nothing to do with the concealed purposes of God, and when thou dost sit a child at Jesus' feet, the glory of God will shine so from his face that thou shalt forget the riddles which have perplexed thy curiosity before.

3. But, then, *the mysteries of the future*, again, assault curiosity. What a light is the prophecy of God! And yet it is a light that shineth in a dark place. It does not scatter all the darkness; it never was designed to tell us all about the Lord's coming. Why, it stands to reason, it was not possible we should know. I would do all I could to hasten on the glory of God's coming, if I knew the times and the seasons. You would do all you could to frustrate it and delay it. Our individual freedom of action is only preserved by his withholding of the mysteries of the future. How little did Nebuchadnezzar, did Cyrus, did Judas, think that they were hands of the Lord in accomplishing his purposes! Even so as men have read this book, how many battles of Armageddon have been fought out by commentators? I could bring you book after book to demonstrate that some past battle or some impending conflict was indeed the battle of Armageddon, which was to introduce the end. They have had but discomfiture for their presumptuous pains. "What is that to thee?" Dear friend, thou hast no concern with the mysteries of the future. Oh, think! no one of us knows what shall be on the morrow. We are shut down to this very moment. What presumption to look out beyond the horizon that God's Providence has placed about us! To-day gives us no hold on to-morrow. To-day's health does not necessarily prophecy to-morrow's weal. To-day's prosperity may be followed by a night of adversity. Death may come to my home, to your home, before another sun shall rise. Each day is a new page. We turn it over; we know not what is written thereon. Each day is a new turn in a path that we know not; but God is our leader. The most important events—the prosperity, the success of our lives, the greatest evil, the

hour of our departure, the beginning of the illness that is to lay us low—all these take us by surprise. I never knew a death that was not, in its article and fact, a surprise, no matter how long-continued had been the preceding illness. I never knew an adversity, no matter how much foresight had predicted it, which did not absolutely take one as a thief in the night. Solomon, the wise man, said, "Man, also, knoweth not his time. As the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the bird is caught in the snare, so are the sons of men snared in the evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them."

My dear friends, leave the mystery of the future to itself. It is very unimportant to know where hell is; it is vastly important that you should avoid it. It is insignificant and impertinent to ask whether there is a recognition of friends in the other world; it is of eternal importance that you should enter in at the straight gate. Oh, these mysteries! let God have them until he makes them plain. He has told me enough: I am immortal; I must stand before the Judge; I know what he will ask; I know what will be demanded. If I stand not in the righteousness of him who is mighty to save, I can hear, already, ringing in my ears, the word, "Depart! depart!" "Let me hear no more of the mysteries of God," should every wise man say, "until I have guided my life aright by those I know."

II. And now I close with the suggestion of a few words about THE LINE OF CAREFULNESS. "Follow thou me." Our Lord told Peter twice to follow him—he did not tell John at all; and yet, if you will read the passage, you will find that his rebuke was brought about by Peter's criticism of John's sweet, reliant, confiding action. Oh! it is grand to see one, from the impulse of his own desire, starting out to be a follower of Jesus; but if that does not come, the words must be spoken, "Follow thou me."

My dear brother, cultivate the sense of personal responsibility to Jesus Christ. He has bought thee with a price. Thou art not thine own; thou art his. He is thy leader. He is the *man appointed to judge thee*. Let those eyes which swim in

tears at Nain's gate, and flashed with fire in the reproof of hypocrisy and sin—let those eyes ever see thee, in thy daily life, following Christ, cultivating the consciousness of personal relationship to Jesus. What a privilege it is! I may lay my head upon his bosom, though he is unseen. You may love him, though now you see him not. You may clasp hands with him by the revelation of his spirit in his word. Let the invitation have its own power. Shall the sun shine upon the icicle, and the water respond to its command and drop down—shall the loadstone speak to the iron filings, and out of the dust they be gathered about the influence that they have recognized—and the word of Christ be not known as a force? When he says, by his spirit, to you, brother, "Follow thou me," be sure that you will bow down before him with reverence and love, and say, "My Lord, my God, I have found thee; thou hast found me."

Cultivate the effort of personal conformity to Christ. Let him be thy model in all the days as they pass, and the circumstances of thy living. Dr. Judson's wife, it is related in his biography, one day read to him a passage from the newspaper in which he was compared to one of the Apostles, thinking to please him, and I have written down his words in answer. Let us make them our own, as he says, to each one: "Follow thou me:" "I do not want to be like them. I do not want to be like Paul, nor Apollos, nor Cephas, nor any mere man. I want to be like Christ. We have only one perfectly safe example—only One, who, tempted like as we are, in every point, was yet without sin. I want to follow him only; copy his teachings; drink in his spirit, place my feet in his footsteps, and measure their shortcomings by those of him alone. Oh, to be more like Christ!"

Curiosity falls asleep on Jesus' bosom. Love forgets to cavil at a brother's ill; pleads now, with voice of faith, for all men's weal; and consecrates itself, like the Lord himself, to go about speaking and doing good. Curiosity is blessed in the conversion of grace.

EARTH'S BRIGHTER SIDE.

By REV. DAVID SWING.

"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord."—PSALM xxxiii. 5.

IT is so much the custom of the thinking public to complain over the sorrows of earth, that we all seem to need some allusion at least to whatever of goodness there may be upon this much loved ball. Though our age is one of vast material and intellectual progress, it is not one of happiness. Of late years the public philosophy has been a sad one. Its acuteness has been employed in the perception of the sorrowful. It has looked so long and so tenderly toward the enslaved, and the poor, and the blind, and the dumb, and the heathen lands, that it has kept its own eyes and all our eyes full of tears through all this century. It is the first duty of philosophy, religious and secular, to look after the unfortunate. Like the Saviour, it leaves the ninety and nine, and wanders, over hill and dale, in search of the one that is lost in the dangerous wilderness. Being employed not by the peace and joy of earth, but by its sorrow and turmoil, our calmest philosophy of Mill, and Cousin, and Bright, and Channing, and Sumner, comes to us deeply influenced by the scenes amid which it walked, and sighed, and wrought out its soliloquy. From the very nature of the case, philanthropy is a study of evil rather than a rapture over the good, just as the medical science is a study of disease; and being such we must always expect the great minds that speak to

us from the porch and the pulpit to speak to us from only one aspect of human life.

The world is so vast that not only do single hearts see but a part of it, but sometimes whole centuries move along only a narrow path, gazing like a railway passenger only a little way to the right or left.

Not long since, when some good, noble women met to hold converse regarding their unhappy sisters in the great dark empire, they wept as they spoke, because, in the deep study of India, their hearts had cast out all the other scenes of earth, and the cup of pity was full indeed. Thus all benevolent philosophy is a survey of earth's wretchedness, and nearly always weeps as it speaks.

There is no cure for this weeping. The facts of earth are such that it will have to continue for years which no human logic can count. There can be no check given. There should be no complaint. The most honourable and manly sadness that earth beholds is this sadness of social and religious philanthropy. But, then, there is another side. There are good things in this world, many and important, and each soul should draw from this confession and from the pursuit of these things the most possible of happiness and self-development.

"The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord." When we learn from astronomy something about the grand scale upon which the universe is made, and when, by looking into the mind and heart of man, we behold what powers are hidden there, we ought at once to suspect that the career of man is projected upon a grand scale, and that the "goodness of the Lord" is ready to reveal itself in the phenomenon of human life. The earth may be full of goodness for man, goodness of mind and soul, and yet it may be hidden away like the gold in the mines, or the diamond among the Afrie sands.

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear,"

and thus human life holds the goodness of the Lord imprisoned

in its depths, but holds it, and it is ever ready to burst forth into life. The gems of ocean hidden in unfathomed caves, and the flowers that blush unseen and waste their sweetness, are all ready to be brought to the home of man—the gems to glitter and the flowers to bloom in his sight. There are moral gems and intellectual bloom waiting to be sought for in the great deep of life, or growing in its broad expanse. One fact that so fills life with disappointment, and that drapes in mourning all our philosophy and religion, may be found in our efforts to fish pearls up from a sea where there are none, and to find flowers where they never bloom, seen or unseen, and never waste any sweetness on the desert air.

The fact that there is “goodness of God” in this world does not warrant us in expecting to find it everywhere. There are only a few mountains that are full of gold. It is not upon every shore one can find gems in the sand. For every spot of such richness there are thousands of square miles of stunted sagebrush and dewless plain. Æneas and his companions roamed through a large forest many a mile before they saw the tree that bore the limb of solid gold. They had become discouraged. Their eyes were weary of the long looking, but at last they saw the yellow among the green, and soon held in their hand the bough before which the gates of heaven were to fly open.

The “goodness of God” does not lie easily found; it may not lie on every hand like mere dirt or lifeless stone, but all reason and all revelation assure us that somewhere in the great forest the golden bough is growing, and before the patient wanderer through the deep shade suddenly will flash up the magic branch that will open to him all the best gates of earth and sky.

If God's goodness is in the earth, it will be found only in such localities as were pleasing to himself, and hence, away from these places we shall always seek it in vain. We shall find the best outcome of life in riches, or ambition, or idleness, or vice only upon condition that they are points where the Creator has *sown his gems and jewels* for our finding. In the Dead Sea there

are no forms of life; hence the fisherman makes no search there, and enters no complaint: he goes elsewhere. But in the long day of life man will repeatedly drag a dead sea with his net, and complain that he catches nothing. Daily we let down our nets into the water of avarice, or vanity, or selfishness, or sin, and finding them empty at last, and our body and soul weary, we abuse the world and declare life a calamity. As Christ said, "Cast ye upon the other side of the ship."

By these reflections we may be led to the conclusion that there is a form of human life that possesses something of the "goodness of the Lord." Though we may not have found it, yet it must be here upon earth somewhere, for this world is from a great God, and man is in the image of a great God, and hence there must be something great and good in this world. There is some place and time in human activity where and when God comes down and pours out his blessing. It must be that earth offers room somewhere for greatness and happiness.

Making the assumed character of God our measuring line, the "happy life" of man must be only a kind of high life. There may be tears at last in such a career. All the earth will at least expire in grief, even if it does not live in it. But the life that shall come nearest to happiness, and whose tears shall burn least, and shall mingle ecstasy with sadness, shall always be the "high life" of education and morality. The words "higher life" are not used here in the sense of the few last years—a sense emotional and often fanatical—but in a sense that comes from the memory of earth's high souls, from Paul to Washington, from Aurelius to Franklin. Though the "higher life" of the Christian is the best ideal, yet it is not in that alone the greatness of earth is gathered. At least for this hour I speak of the "high life" in a most general manner, and not in the special recent sense of those words.

In the arts, those who are entitled to speak in that domain make constant use of the terms "high" and "low art." They seem to mean that the art is "high" when it presents pure and large thoughts, and when the execution by the hand is

worthy of the thought. In walking through a gallery not long since, a great critic remarked, "There is fine work, but no subject. The execution is wonderful, the subject contemptible." It would follow from such words that in painting it is the union of ideas and execution that make the "high art." There is no law against transferring such language and such a method of measurement away from picture rooms over to the homes of men. Borrowing the language of artists, and carrying it from the canvas to human life, we may say that there is such a thing as a "high life," and that it is made up of good ideas well wrought out. When we walk along the great scenes of earth and behold a man absorbed in mere money-getting, or office-seeking, or in vice, we may say there is fine work, but no subject; a fine cutting of good marble to produce a figure of no possible significance.

If ever we shall get any good out of these threescore years, it will be by the formula of the artists, that there is a "high life," a doing of good work to bring out good ideas. Indeed the fine arts are nothing else than a corner of man's continent. They are the soul expressing a part of itself in marble, or painting, or music, or architecture. What sublimity there is in the great architecture of the world, and in the heights and depths of its music! But do these arts consume all that is noble in man? Has he no greatness left?

Oh, what narrow, frail creatures we are! The "goodness of God" that bursts forth in music and all the arts is even more ready to spring forth from all the chambers of the mind and soul. It is by the will of man only that a part of earth is made "fine" and "lofty," and all the remainder left coarse and low. A high life is as possible as a high art. Moral beauty is as possible as material beauty; and in his "Dialogue" Plato said, "Great is the destiny of the soul that passes from the beauty of the world to the beauty of God."

Let us, however, turn from the theory of earth's goodness to some survey of the fact. Much as we all abuse this world, and speak of it as sin-ruined and hell-deserving; much as we call it

the "valley of humiliation," and "slough of despond;" yet its history has in it points of greatness if in the proper spirit we read the open page. Wherever a heart is turned aside from mere sensuality, from the life of a mere brute, this earth has responded to the better aspiration, and has shown its willingness to lead onward and upward each nobly ambitious soul. When Socrates, and Plato, and Cato, and Seneca appealed to earth for something better than the vices of the sensualist, or the bloody fame of a conqueror, our little star heard their petition and covered them with gifts of mind and soul that will always surpass estimate. When Antonine the Pious asked our world if it had no power except that of wickedness, and no pleasure but vice, it answered him by bestowing upon him the crown of piety, and by filling him with the rapture of prayer. Pliny found this world large and beautiful. It was only too full of sublimity. All its truths lay before him as coloured shells upon the beach. In those days there was an illustrious company of mortals to whom earth was by no means small or unworthy. Looking back upon their lives, seeing their greatness of mind and of spirit, and recalling in what homes and in what libraries, and amid what poetry and eloquence and art they passed their days, we cannot but feel that the "goodness of God" lay around them like a robe of joy and light. They may not have perceived nor felt deeply enough this infinite kindness, but if so, that was not the first nor last time wherein the human heart has been happy without knowing from what fountain its joys have come. The child exults and laughs and plays about its mother's house, and almost up to full life drinks in blessedness at the "home, sweet home," and only in late years, from the time of silver hairs, looks back and sees that the mother and the kind father were the angels of that house, the hidden sources of its joy and peace. So the world's lofty men in ages gone may not have discerned fully the form of their benefactor, but now in far-off times, looking back, we clearly perceive that the goodness of God was around and beneath them.

It is well, in seeking traces of a benevolent Creator, thus to

go away from the record of the Bible alone; for such an exclusive study might lead us to feel that the kindness of the Almighty was confined within the channel of that sacred record, and that all the world apart from Judea lay beneath the beatings of an incessant wrath. It is well, at times, to look at man universally, and to come back with the feelings that the good will of the Father in heaven shone forth, not only around Moses and Daniel, but also around Homer, and Virgil, and Aurelius. God is no respecter of persons. He may not call all men alike into his presence, and make to all a revelation of his will; but his goodness is free to all, and it was poured out to Roman and Greek, though the hand of blessing was unseen. Wherever the heart has toiled upward it has found God.

It is not only cheering to our hearts, but it is the part of exact justice, to turn aside at times from the desolations of earth, from its scenes of poverty and vice and ignorance—places which grow now the harvest of atheism and doubt—and mark what broad fields of sunshine there have been always running in great bands across our world. As the light and shadow are seen in summer following each other over the mountains, so, in the history of man, the great shadows that have filled kind hearts with compassion for the multitude have been attended by outbursts of sunshine which ought to betray the presence and wish of the Creator. One reason why we weep over the past more than we rejoice over it may be found in the fact that the tomb holds it all, and that the soul instinctively pities all that has been so unfortunate as to die. The grave casts its gloom over all that is not now living along with us. From the unknown place where Moses was hidden from the sight of man, to the last rites of our Christian heroes, the very fact of death has covered all the past with a drapery of blackness. But we know so little about the real import of death that we are not justified in permitting it to clothe earth with gloom. Our tears may be only those of ignorance and timidity. They may be the *shrinking* back of children in the dark. If you will omit death

from the estimate, or will suppose it to be the gateway to a still higher form of divine goodness, then what a mighty world this has been ! Turn away from the tomb of a Moses, and from his bowed-down, dying form, and what a life was his ! From an humble cradle to a palace ! He drank in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. With a loftiness of soul, like that of Charles the Twelfth and Washington, he chose rather to suffer affliction with the children of God than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; and with such a spirit he led his nation toward liberty, when the human race was young, and the giants held all the middle ground ; when the day of manhood was just dawning upon a world of violence. It is true, his last hours were bitter and dark ; but they were only a few of the moments of a long life. A hundred years of greatness stood back of that lonely death-bed, and by their events, long and varied and grand, they place the goodness of God above the reproaches of those final tears. What counts a lonely death against such a life ?

There is a light in which earth is seen to have been and to be truly great. The elements of greatness at least are within it. It may be seen to contain seeds of happiness and success sown by the Almighty. That light of things is this : Turn aside from the petty sorrows of a Moses and a Seneca, and mark the long and unbending greatness of their many years. Look not only upon the ruins of Athens and Alexandria, but look upon the centuries of mental and spiritual beauty that enveloped them before they fell. Turn your faces away from those who heaped the fagots around the Christian martyrs, and, having emptied your souls of indignation, look upon the holy faces of the martyrs themselves—Cranmer and Rogers, and the early Christians, Paul and James and Luke, and read in their spirits how much of divine grandeur God has poured out upon our star. The last moments of these martyrs were but an atom of their magnificent lives, and should not hide from us the love of God displayed in the long days of their pilgrimage. Of the import of death we know little. As in the night we all startle once before we fall truly to sleep, so death may be only a jar, a *startle of the spirit*, as it sinks from one realm to wake in another.

Far be it from me to attempt to persuade you that this life is all rosy, and that our eyes need never weep. There is no logic equal to such a task. But upon all questions there is "another side" of greater or less significance; and, be it powerful or weak, it must always be subjected to an examination and an estimate. Sinful and sorrowful as the world is, there is also an immense goodness and greatness and happiness in its confines. A God of love, a Jesus Christ, are always moving across it from north to south and from east to west. The sunlit spots in history, the Advent, the Gospels written for man, the hymns that have risen from happy hearts for thousands of years, the varied forms of greatness that have come to men and to nations, the ever-recurring spectacle of noble lives, all tell us that the place on which we stand is holy ground.

From these reflections may we not infer that there is in this world, so denounced and so mistrusted, a form of higher life—a life of honour, of education, of love, of Christianity—which may answer all who complain and who distrust, and may make our earth seem all full of the goodness of God? There may be gems here for us all, only we are seeking for them upon the wrong shore. The past forms of human excellence indicate the fact that happiness cannot be found in things external to the soul. None of the glory of man to which we have alluded has come from property, or from fame, or from transient passions, but from the furniture of the mind and from the impulses and powers of the heart. From a survey of history, from an hour spent over the memory of all the illustrious ones in science and benevolence and religion, from a communion (even the briefest) with such a human-divine being as Christ, the inference comes irresistibly that when earth is made the theatre of a conscientious and enlightened soul, struggling not toward riches but toward the useful and the good, then it suddenly beams out a star of the first magnitude. It no longer seems a burnt-up world, forsaken and forgotten of its Maker, but seems a chariot, with Christ standing beside the traveller, and with the wheels rolling across the open plain between time and eternity.

PURITY PERCEIVES GOD.

BY REV. E. L. HURD, D.D.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."—MATT. v. 8.

THIS is not an arbitrary condition made so by God. It is not as if God should offer special reward if you would do certain things, a reward which had no connection with your action. You have been offered in your childhood some gift as an incentive to a given course of conduct. The gift had no natural connection with your action, and was only associated with it in the offer. Faithful work in school for a term had no natural connection with a new knife or with a desired journey or visit. It had an immediate connection with a reward wrought out in yourself, viz., the development and furnishing of your own mind.

The rewards and the punishments of the Word of God should ever be viewed as mainly and prominently the product of courses of life and action. There are both the smile and the frown of Almighty God. But this frown or this wrath finds its expression in the channel mainly, if not entirely, of natural results. There is nothing at least inconsistent with those plain statements in the Scriptures that men shall realize the natural results of their own actions. They shall all—every man—be rewarded according to their works. They shall eat the fruit of their own doings. They shall be filled with their own devices. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Sowing the wind is naturally followed by reaping the whirlwind; and, as the prophet expressed it, "The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind." The disapproved of God find expression through the whirlwind, which is the product of the wind sowing. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Do you see those luscious grapes of Eschol? It was not a thorn which was planted there. Do men gather figs of thistles? Everywhere there is the connection of cause and effect, of tendency and result. There is a line of conduct tending naturally toward a certain result, and that result reached at length. Sometimes the result appears almost at the same time, here and now, and is only wrought out with more and more intensity in the future. To the experienced eye it is so at the very planting of the grape or the thorn. The contrasted result is all this in germ. And all along in the growth it is the same, only more and more palpable. In the harvest the result comes out in full and complete development. One man has pricking thorns—just what he planted; the other has grapes—just what he planted. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap."

Our text, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," is a plain statement of the constant truth in one form. It is not a reward away off yonder, which God has chosen arbitrarily to offer us if we will be pure in heart; not something, however costly, which our Father has bought for us in some foreign market, and has laid up for us in case we will be good. It is a revelation to us of what comes of purity of heart, what is indissolubly connected with a pure heart, and grows out of it. A pure heart, and such a heart only, as a matter of fact, sees God. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," is another statement in the negative form of the same truth. An impure heart does not see God, ever, is the plain matter of fact. Men cannot see in the fog, or in the dark night, or when they are blind. This is the truth stated. Then there is a rare pleasure to one who shall climb yonder mountain heights. He shall feel an exhilaration of being such as is not found elsewhere. Views *shall open* before him such as have not even entered his imagina-

tion beside. Absorbing scenes of mountain grandeur, enchanting pictures of vale and plain, shall enchain his attention and lead out his soul as never before. It may be that for once he shall look down upon a thunder-storm and see the lightnings of heaven playing in clouds that roll beneath his feet. All this is not an arbitrary reward, which will be given to one who climbs the mountain side. It is what would be there, though he stayed away. It is what he will find and see if he does climb. It is what will burst upon every view which attains that elevation. Go down from that mountain and into yon dismal swamp, and enter that miserable hut of those who have their dwelling there. In fogs, and damp, and malaria, and chills, and fevers, they have no conception of the bracing mountain air, of the exhilaration of mountain life, of the grandeur and beauty of mountain view. And any true account of what one finds and feels on yonder mountain will seem to them as gross exaggeration, or mere fancy. Their deprivation is not an arbitrary punishment inflicted upon them for living in the marsh. They find what is simply in the marsh. He who lives in the swamp shall find fogs, and damp, and malaria, and ague, and fever. He who climbs the mountain shall find pure and bracing air, and exhilarating life, and glorious vision. Happy, for that hour at least, are they who climb where these pleasures to life and sight are.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” “Blessed are those who ascend into the mountain atmosphere of purity where God is.” It is not a promise of something in the future to those who will attain purity of heart. It is a statement of what purity does. It perceives God. The pure in heart see God, and they *only* see God. They who are gaining purity of heart are approaching the knowledge and perception of God. They who are becoming pure are ascending where God is to be seen. Our text is a statement of a universal and personal truth, eternal and unchangeable. The pure in heart see God; others do not see him. Happy, therefore, are the pure in heart.

This purity of heart is, first of all, that freedom from unclean-

ness of which we first think when we hear the text. It is that absence of pollution which David sought in the prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." But it is more than this. It is freedom from falsehood, from double-mindedness, from attachment to what is untrue, or what is beclouded, or what is low and base. Loving darkness rather than light does not belong to such a heart. Loving light rather than darkness does belong to it. Tending toward what is high rather than what is low, toward what is cloudy, toward light rather than darkness, toward the pure rather than the impure, toward the heavenly rather than the earthly. This is this purity of heart—pure, unalloyed, sincere. Moral purity is the main feature. Then freedom from all admixture which tends to blind or obscure.

You see a person obviously, morally unclean in heart, as you judge rightly by the outflowings from that heart, in words or in actions, or in a tone or manner expressing actions or words. You see another, in whom, though you see no special and gross pollution, yet there is such a mixture of motives that you could not have confidence in the purity of his motive, and consequently you could not be certain of his intentions or his actions. His view of what is reality, and even interest and duty, is not unmixed. There is another who is not grossly impure, and whose motives can be in a measure relied upon, until you cross the track of some ruling and reigning earthliness which has taken possession of the heart. There is some unclean, or at least sensual or earthly god, which is enthroned in the affections of the soul, and this influences all the vision. We doubtless see well enough what is this purity of heart in itself and in its opposition. Blessed are those who have this purity of heart. They already see God dimly imperfect. They shall go on to see him more and more, and they are the only ones who can see him, who are capable of seeing him.

If we will look through all the realms of possible knowledge of God, we shall see how essential to that knowledge is this purity of heart. Look at any of the essentially impure nations whose impurity has not been interfered with, nor even washed

off from the surface. I will not take any of the degraded tribes of Africa, who simply lie in their uncleanness, nor ask you to look at the significant fact that, so far from having any knowledge of God, they imagine a demon in the shade of every bush and in every nook and recess. These they fear and propitiate, but have no idea of God anywhere in nature or above nature. But look at those most civilized of pagans, whose Josh-houses are already planted on our western shore. They are a wonderful people, have a wonderful civilization, and no inconsiderable literature; but their moral impurities run in every vein and artery of their social life, and flood their very language and literature. They could, therefore, never see God. They are not in that atmosphere of purity where God can be seen. Do they see God in the natural sciences? They cannot see, have never found, those facts of science which, in their truth, approach God. Their science is all science falsely so called. It is science based everywhere upon falsehood. They have no real cosmogony, nor geography, nor chemistry, nor philosophy, nor astronomy. We cannot wade through the mass of inanity and nonsense which they teach for science. Truth is not there; solid basis, or basis at all, is not there; the real world and universe are not there; God the Maker is not there. I need not refer you to their utter ignorance of all that has been made known to us of those principles of the divine government which constituted a system of sound ethics and moral philosophy. Starting from that impure source of action, their impure hearts, they have gone forth out of the world and government where God is and reigns, into a universe of the imagination, which is essentially earthly, sensual, and devilish. In all their science God is not. In all their literature he is not to be found. In all their theology there is no such supreme moral ruler. Their justly-renowned Confucius is enthroned in their diluted faith as their supreme divinity, and yet his excellent maxims hardly influence the life. In so impure an atmosphere truth and God are not.

But why do we go to China for our illustrations? We can

see in every experiment we make in every direction the truth of our text, that it is they who have pure hearts that shall see God.

We can see the truth illustrated in the fact that purity of heart is so essential to the best success in intellectual application. Sensuality puts out the eyes of the mind. Any of these views obscure the mental visions so that truth, even in science, cannot be seen. Even avarice is inconsistent with intellectual success. If the men who become somewhat educated in books and science, and afterwards become very sordid with avarice, had been so when students, they would have had very little success. Just so far as the impurities of whatever kind have stained the heart of the young pupil, they retard in his intellectual perception and advancement. All the realm of study is a vast volume, wherein on every page God is revealed. It is all a book which God has written, and almost wholly concerning himself. In all study, therefore, so far as we attain real truth, real fact, we are approaching God intellectually, if in no other way. We are like Jacob at the foot of the ladder which leads up to heaven. And even if we do not in our vision see so far thither as he did, and behold the Lord God at the top of the ladder, we yet see the steps, or some of them, which lead up toward God. Every earth-fog, all of earth's dust upon the heart, tend to prevent the vision of God which opens to us all the sciences. An impure heart makes just so far a weak and beclouded intellect. Truths and facts which, when we get them, we find to be certain items about God, are hidden or obscured. We do not see God even in the face of nature which reflects him, nor in those revelations which he himself has written upon the great scroll of the universe.

The realm of the fine arts forcibly illustrates our truth. Ruskin has beautifully shown that no one can be a true artist in any high ideal, without purity of heart—"with clear and unoffending sight upholding God for ever, according to the written promise, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'" He is right. For all that is most delicate and

most difficult, and yet most glorious and enchanting in nature, which is to be seized by the artist and restored from his ideal upon canvas, is beyond the reach of a sordid and sensual artist. The impure in heart cannot ascend into the higher walks of art wherever the finer and higher works of the Great and Divine Artist abound. Ask in all the realms of poetry, and music, and oratory, and the masters are evermore those of comparatively pure hearts; and their truest poetry, their only true poetry, comes from their purest moments. Throughout the regions of science, literature, and art it is the pure in heart who are able to see God—to see the reflections of God, to see the truths and facts that lead to God.

How emphatically this is true of any perception of God himself! “The world by wisdom knew not God,” because the world’s impure heart turned the world’s eye away from God. Their foolish heart was darkened. They were alienated from the life of God by the darkness which was in them. Every attempt to see God, to know God through the cloudy atmosphere of our impure hearts, is futile. This is the reason that we can know so little of God in this life. Because we are so impure. This is the reason that in the strictest sense no man can see God. There is too much of impurity. But in so far as we do attain unto glimpses and blend visions of a true knowledge of God, it is when we are lifted “out of the horrible pit of mire and clay” into comparative light and purity. The very process of our conversion and elevation into a true knowledge of God is a purifying process. And only so far as we become pure in heart can we see God. This is true. The region of truth and of God is a region of purity. Only so far as we attain to purity of heart do we ascend in to that region where we can see truth and God. Here the question, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?” finds its emphatic answer: “He that hath clean hands and a pure heart.”

In our atmosphere I have noticed that the lower strata of clouds have some beauty and some grandeur; they are not pure in colour, but with them belong the smoke, and the steam, and

the mirage, and the malaria, and all that pertains to earthly exhalations. Above them, above the rain-clouds, are those which have left behind much of this earthly evaporation, and are able to ascend higher, because they are pure. Still, they are not of perfect hue—their robes, though celestial, are soiled by earth, and they are not able to ascend above drifting winds. Blown about they are by every wind of doctrine. But far above them, at a distance counted no longer by feet, but by miles, you shall through the dry air of an arid summer see other clouds. If you were on the pinnacle of the highest mountain in the world, you would still see them far above in the blue sky. You see them marshalled in serried ranks, and divided into orderly companies, beautiful in their array, and still more beautiful in their costume. The white of their drapery is pure, bordered with tints the most delicate, changeable as none but God's appointed artist could shade them. They have left behind them most of the impurities of earth, and are able to rise and abide in the blue serene above. And we see them serenely triumphant above the storms and winds connecting the lower atmosphere.

Here we have a picture of the truth before us. We abide in the fogs and malaria of earth, or we ascend somewhat above them, where we can see more, and are less affected by their blinding mists, but where we still do not see clearly, and are more or less corrupted and affected; or we are ascending still higher, where universal truth and God are. And in proportion to our attained purity is our vision cleared to perceive universal truth, universal knowledge, a God enthroned in truth and knowledge. "Blessed are the pure in heart: they shall see God."

The ethical in religion, that which seeks and cultivates both internal and external purity, sensitiveness to right, conscientiousness—this must have a higher place, this is placed highest by Christ in the fifth of Matthew. This sees God. Correct thought and opinion, orthodoxy, is desirable; but this has been known in large degree with a failure to see God; while the pure and loving heart, of the little child in Christ Jesus is lifted up where, with clear vision, it can see God. The vastest flights of intellect

are often remote from God; while the fluttering of a heart tender with love and purity is always near to the eternal throne.

Vast effort, the best that minds and hearts could give, have been expended upon the mere outworks of Christianity, and even upon that which only served to divide and weaken, to the neglect often of this, which is the central treasury of jewels, without which outworks of defence may as well be neglected. How often does the picture of Christ recur—whited sepulchres—beautiful sculptured marble, the church has sometimes erected around “uncleanness” with great expense, pains, and labour.

There is a heaven for you, my brother, which sees God with great and increasing delight here, even now, in this world. In those best moments of your life, when you realise with great chagrin that your best resolutions of the morning were overthrown in the temptations of the day, will you not seek the guidings of that strength, which will fortify your heart, and secure to you that heaven in your own soul, wherein God shall dwell, and be your God?

Vintage Gleanings from the American Pulpit.

The word "path" is equivalent to our word "road." We have been familiar from our childhood with the universality of roads, and their permanence. We scarcely imagine a condition of society in which a road was not one of the highest marks of civilization. I believe there is in Palestine to-day but one. Paths still are the only thoroughfares; but in ancient times, when men grew dull, and heedless, and selfish, even these paths were obliterated, the current washed them out, or the thickets overgrew them; and as there was no interchange of commerce, paths disappeared for the most part, and then men that went from province to province, or from tribe to tribe, were obliged to thread their way as best they might through the gorge, the thicket, and over the rocks, stumbling here and there in the most inconvenient way possible. The way in which men are accustomed to walk with their feet would very naturally suggest the road in which men's thoughts walk. And so we find the whole Word of God full of paths, ways, walks, as equivalent to the habits—social, moral, and political—of people. The transfer was almost inevitable from a physical to a moral path. You will find, therefore, upon investigation, in the Old Testament particularly, that paths refer not only to physical habits, but also apply to manners and customs. Paths, or the way, as they are laid down in the Old Testament, refer to the regular carriage also of a man's disposition to the line or path which his thoughts pursue, and especially to the moral disposition; to all those habits which were engendered by institutions, and laws, and customs.

In every period of the world, professors of religion, the most devoted and the fullest of spiritual enthusiasm, have been declared by the world to be insane. This began with Noah. When he was building the ark, at a place near no river and remote from any sea, and was constructing it so large that it could not be carried to any stream, he told them that it was not for any sea, and they replied that he was beside himself. When David, years after, leaped for joy before the ark at the returning favour of God, he was called a madman, and his wife was first in denouncing him. The prophets were called wild and raving in their denunciations of sinners. John the Baptist was crazy to his generation. Paul was told that much learning had made him mad, and Jesus was said to have a devil and to be mad. And in this age every minister has to defend himself at some time during his life against some foolish charge. There is indeed a way by which a person can avoid this charge of madness. Let him attend the church regularly, pay his dues promptly, be quiet, never deny himself for others, avoid praying too much, keep away from the prayer meeting, never talk to a man about his soul; let him not disturb society, nor do anything for religion more than to make a decent acknowledgment of it. Pursue this course and there is no doubt that you will not be called crazy. Ministers, too, can avoid this charge. There are many topics in the Bible pleasant to talk about; heaven, for instance—if you do not say too much about the preparation necessary to enable your hearers to reach it—or good manners, about which you can preach from the text, “Be courteous.” I remember once attending the fashionable church in Hanover Square, London. It was filled with dukes, duchesses, and dowagers, and lords, and ladies. The assembly was a most respectable crowd of sinners, who confessed their sins of omission and commission without the slightest token of disquiet. The clergyman, with apparent reluctance, gently told those dukes and lords, and duchesses and ladies, that the chief duty of a minister was to be faithful, and, acting on this principle, he went on to inform them, with great delicacy, that those who failed to keep God’s command-

ments might all find that they were creating circumstances "which, beloved brethren, you may find exceedingly unpleasant in the great hereafter." That clergyman was never called a madman.

All truths are first probationary. They have got to be martyrs. They must be ransacked and studied before they can be accepted, and he is not a wise man who will throw aside at once the faith of his fathers and rush to the embrace of a new idea. I would not have a man run in a mould, but let him not be wise in his own conceit. Every man ought to find out for himself the truth of new things, some say, and to explore all those matters he hears of; that everybody must think for himself, and not let anybody think for him. Suppose I should go out, and, meeting a dandy, "Why do you go to a tailor for your clothes? Why do you not make them yourself? Do your own work, not let another furnish brains and skill for you." No. He knows that the tailor can do it better than he can, and it is not degrading for a man to admit it or to rely upon it. Lindley, the botanist, said once that a man must not think he can in a life time become a universal botanist. He can only master a single department. So it is with us. We must not expect ability to investigate everything in the world. We must be willing to take other men's ideas when we know they are better than our own.

The Gospel is needed in times of sorrow, when hopes are blasted, when homes are broken up, when plans for the future become impossible, and reputation suffers. Then the Gospel comes to banish the gloom, to open the shutters of the soul and let in the light and the fragrance of heaven. God sympathizes with the sorrowful, and those in trouble are nearest to his heart. Out of sorrow come triumph and success. Grief furthers us in whatever is loveliest and noblest. The glory of heaven dispels the gloom of earth.

Words are like bullets; their effect depends upon their source.





